Conference Travel
Is it really worth it?

I NEED YOU TO FLY TO SEATTLE FOR A QUICK MEETING.

WILL I BE MEETING WITH A NEWLY DISCOVERED STONE AGE TRIBE THAT HAS NEVER USED SKYPE?

NO.

THEN I'M TOTALLY CONFUSED.

Rikke Apelfröjd
Martin Berglund
Federico Binda
Marta Leniec
Jonathan Chico

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The Issue

• Traveling to Conferences and meetings has impact on:
  – The Environment.
  – Economy of the group.
  – Can be exploited.

• But:
  – Opportunity for networking and collaboration.
  – Advertising of research.
  – Source of new ideas.
Whose problem is it?

Each researcher is faced with this dilemma.

- The decision on this issue affect:
  - The environment.
  - Conference organizers.
  - Publishers.
  - Researchers publishing primarily in proceedings.
  - Group finances.
  - Tax payers.
Some solutions

• Individual evaluation of the gain in going to conference/meeting.
• More pure video conferences.
• External decision panels, e.g. travel grants agencies.
• Set of rules for travel, e.g. maximum number of travels per year.
• More remote access to conference material, e.g. streaming of the presentations.
When the individual chooses...

- What will be gained?
- Is there any other equally good option?
- How much have you traveled recently?
- How do you get there?
- Are there any other ethical issues, related to organizer/location? E.g. human rights violations, etc.
What can be done?

- Go to the top to ensure that a general viewpoint in the research group is set.
- Enforce rules regarding travel, e.g. conference attendance is not a holiday.
- Bring attention to this topic, e.g. in the ethics course.
Thank you for listening!