

**Work With Me!**  
(Abhishek Nagaraj, June 2020)

I'm usually looking for research assistants and PhD students to help me on ongoing research projects.

- If you are a prospective PhD student interested in working with me – I do not admit candidates to our department individually. You should apply to the [MORS PhD program](#) in the “Macro” track and signal your interest in working with me.
- If you are a pre-doctoral candidate interested in being advised by me, either remotely on a part-time basis or in residence at Berkeley (for current Berkeley undergraduates only) please read on and email me directly as appropriate ([nagaraj@berkeley.edu](mailto:nagaraj@berkeley.edu)).

**Topics:** My research usually looks at the role of digital information in shaping market outcomes, especially in geospatial and mapping contexts. In past work, I've looked at the [impact of satellite imaging on discovery and entrepreneurship](#) in the gold mining industry, [the impact of copyright on digital magazines on content quality on Wikipedia](#), [the impact of competition on contributions to OpenStreetMap](#). Each of these projects use “big data” techniques to make a causal argument with observational data using techniques borrowed from applied econometrics, such as panel models (“difference in difference”) or regressions discontinuity designs. If working with large data-sets in digital or geospatial settings excites you, my work might be interesting. If you want to apply to economics/ business school / public-policy / stats PhD programs and want to get some experience or would like to know more, my work might be a good fit for you, esp. if you are interested in topics around technology, entrepreneurship or innovation management.

**What I look for:** Since my work relies heavily on data processing and analysis, I've found it most productive to work with undergraduates who are extremely proficient with tools and techniques to create and analyze large datasets. These include python, \*nix tools (e.g. working on a remote server, git etc) as well as R and/or Stata. Econometric training including exposure to quasi-experimental research designs is also preferred but not necessary.

If you are *still* interested in helping me on my research, please send me an email with the subject line “Work with me response” and a short introduction or your CV, your proficiency with the tools mentioned above and a description of the most complex data analysis/programming project you have undertaken so far. If I'm too overwhelmed to take on another person or if we're not a good fit, I will let you know. If I think that we might have a productive working relationship, I will get back to you with additional questions or clarifications and likely some “trial” non-urgent tasks. If things work out, I will schedule some time to video-chat or meet with you and discuss my ongoing work and projects and ask about your commitment. For things to be most useful for all involved, a commitment of usually 20 hours/week over at least 2 semesters or 10-12 months is necessary.

I especially encourage you to reach out if feel like you have very little exposure to US research or lack other connections with existing PhD students or faculty, but have the skills or desire to help. This could be true if you belong to a racial minority group, a developing country etc – but there are many ways to feel under-represented or disconnected in academic research.

This method of working with undergraduate/master's level RAs has been mutually productive. Some have gone on to graduate programs at places like Harvard, MIT and Berkeley while others have presented research at conferences and gone to work in industry. I look forward to hearing from you!