

Model for fashion cycles shows how people create and respond to trends

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A new computational model accurately reproduces the way fashions travel through a culture, as reported in the Mar. 7 issue of the open access journal *PLoS ONE*.

The model's new feature is the assumption that people copy others' preferences for cultural traits (such as clothing styles), as well as the traits themselves. Previously proposed models were the "status" model, in which a fashion arises because people copy the choices of someone of high status, and the "neutral model," in which people copy each other randomly.

The new model, dubbed the "preference model," was better at reproducing observed behavior than either of the other two, the authors write.

Specifically, the results agreed with two empirical observations: that only a few cultural traits, among the many invented, become very popular, and that trends with rapidly increasing popularity are also abandoned quickly. The work was led by Alberto Acerbi of the University of Stockholm.

More information: Acerbi A, Ghirlanda S, Enquist M (2012) The Logic of Fashion Cycles. *PLoS ONE* 7(3): e32541.

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