ABSTRACT: Much of what we want to know about other people is not directly observable: are you a nice person? do you really agree with me? will you return this loan? Instead, we rely on signals, which are observable, though not always reliable, indicators of these qualities of interest. Signaling theory provides a framework for analyzing the reliability of these cues.

Online, almost everything is a signal. I cannot, for example, directly observe your height but must instead rely on the signal of a photograph or self description.

In this talk I will introduce signaling theory, and then show how it can be used in the analysis of existing communication technologies and the design of new ones.