How do people make decisions in the course of everyday work despite organizational goal ambiguity?
- 14-month ethnography of a digital agency
- Routine of interest: new business pitch development

Three puzzling field observations
1. Confusion about the organization’s goals
   - “What kind of firm are we?”
2. A few strong shared cultural narratives
   - “we are collaborative, we are fun, we are nice”
3. Garbage can pitch development meetings

Unit of analysis: Decisions in Pitch Routines
- Some decisions easily made
  - “Who should speak first?”
- Some decisions avoided
  - “What are we suggesting the client does to their Facebook page?”

Micro-routines of avoidance...
1. Allow the group to manage the anxiety of routine dilemmas
2. Re-affirm shared cultural understandings and cohesiveness...
   so that the group can continue working despite goal ambiguity.

Routines become social defenses against anxiety.

Pitch decisions are avoided via 3 recurring micro-routines
1. Delegate down
2. Punt to avoid conflict
3. Joke and switch topics

Micro-routines of avoidance are also culturally legitimate modes of interaction
- “collaborative” = delegate down
- “nice” = punt to avoid conflict
- “fun” = joke and switch topics

What are dilemmas in a routine?
- Options that offer different assumptions about the nature and goal of the organization
- Structured by the organization’s goal ambiguity
- Create anxiety in routine performance because no clear method of resolution