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[Note: Members of the press can register for the conference online at
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/index.cfm?fuseaction=pressregistration>]

Nassim Taleb, *Black Swan* Author, To Participate in JSM Panel Discussion

Google, Yahoo! and Facebook presenters conduct sessions on web search, online ads and advertisers, marketing intelligence, and data analysis

ALEXANDRIA, VA (PRWEB) AUGUST 1, 2008 – Nassim Nicholas Taleb, author of the highly acclaimed book, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, will participate in a panel at the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) next week, the American Statistical Association (ASA) announced today. JSM, the world's largest annual gathering of statisticians, features 2,500+ presentations, panels, roundtables and other sessions; it is attended by more than 5,000 statistics experts from government, industry and academia. JSM opens at the Colorado Convention Center August 3rd and runs through August 7th.

Taleb's book, which was released in 2007, is highly critical of statisticians and quantitative social scientists ("quants") with respect to their abilities to model randomness, particularly with regard to the ability to predict rare, influential events---"black swans." Several reviews of the book appeared in the August 2007 edition of *The American Statistician (TAS)*, along with a rebuttal by the author. This panel session will provide discussions of the book, of its impact and relevance, and of the applicability of probability models to rare events.

The panel discussion will include, in addition to Taleb, Aaron Brown of AQR Capital Management; Robert Lund, Clemson University; S. Stanley Young, National Institute of Statistical Sciences; and Donald B. Rubin, Harvard University. The organizer and chair of the session is Peter Westfall of Texas Tech University, who is the TAS editor.

Google, Yahoo! and Facebook sessions

Following are descriptions of a few sessions by presenters from Google, Yahoo! and Facebook. Additional sessions can be found at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=main>, where you can search on keywords, presenter's name or affiliation.

Understanding Online Advertisers (Activity #250)

Presenters: Daryl Pregibon and Diane Lamber, Google Inc.

The paying customers of search engines, namely advertisers, enable the free services the search engines provide but are not as well understood as the user population. This session focuses on advertisers: new tools to manage ad campaigns and methods for assessing campaign effectiveness.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstr_actid=300305

Social and Semantic Structures in Web Search (Activity #250)

Presenter: Andrew Tomkins, Yahoo! Inc.

Two orders-of-magnitude more content are created daily to flow through social networks, with as much as two more orders of magnitude still to come. Tomkins will present research results regarding online communities and semantic structures, as well as some challengers for the future. http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300394

Data Analysis at Facebook (Activity #171)

Presenters: Jeff Hammerbacher and Ding Zhou, Facebook

Every day, several terabytes of data are generated by users of Facebook. To extract meaningful information from this data requires a novel infrastructure, scalable algorithms and a respect for the privacy of users.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300361

About JSM

JSM, the world's largest annual gathering of statisticians, is held jointly with the American Statistical Association (ASA), the International Biometric Society (ENAR and WNAR), the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS), and the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC). The theme for this year's conference is *Communicating Statistics: Speaking Out and Reaching Out*. A brief history of the JSM can be found at

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/pdfs/ABriefHistoryoftheASAAnnualMeetings.doc>.

About the American Statistical Association

The American Statistical Association (ASA), a scientific and educational society founded in Boston in 1839, is the second oldest continuously operating professional society in the United States. For more than 160 years, ASA has been providing its 18,000 members serving in academia, government, and industry and the public with up-to-date, useful information about statistics. The ASA has a proud tradition of service to statisticians, quantitative scientists, and users of statistics across a wealth of academic areas and applications. For additional information about the American Statistical Association, please visit the association's web site at <http://www.amstat.org> or call 703.684.1221.

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