Ouroboros and the Alchemy of Machine Translation

Google gives the following definition for **ouroboros**: a circular symbol depicting a snake, or less commonly a dragon, swallowing its tail, as an emblem of wholeness or infinity.

It may be obvious that building a good machine translation (MT) system requires a lot of data. However, what may not be obvious is that training such systems consists of arcane mathematical incantations that require a different type of data. This type of data is not easily available and its lack can lead to sub-optimal translation performance. This talk will describe an attempt to improve this aspect of machine translation using machine translation itself. Math will make a cameo but will not be the star of this production. If time permits, there will also be some discussion of a tool built to help MT developers and researchers evaluate their systems more efficiently.

Nitin Madnani is a Research Scientist with the NLP & Speech group at ETS. His current research interests include paraphrase modeling, short-answer scoring, and grammatical error correction. His programming languages of choice are Python, R and JavaScript. According to his former advisor, "he's more a builder than a thinker," although he did manage to finish his Ph.D. in Computer Science at the University of Maryland, College Park in 2010.

Date:	Thursday, February 19, 2015, 8:00 pm. (Refreshments and networking at 7:30 pm.)
Place:	Small Auditorium, Room CS 105 Computer Science Building, Princeton University
Information:	Dennis Mancl (908) 582-7086
On-line info:	**http://PrincetonACM.acm.org**

All Princeton ACM / IEEE-CS meetings are open to the public. Students and their parents are welcome. There is no admission charge, and refreshments are served.

A pre-meeting dinner is held at 6:00 p.m. at Ruby Tuesday's Restaurant on Route 1. Please send email to **princetonacm@acm.org** in advance if you plan to attend the dinner.