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May 2020 Newsletter

This is a monthly newsletter of updates from OpenRG Experts.
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Don Boyd
Don is Co-Director of the State and Local Government Finance Project at Rockefeller College, SUNY Albany, and a consultant, Open Source Policy Center.

- Published the *Quantitative Note*, "A New Synthetic Data Set for Tax Policy Analysis".
- Presented on COVID-19 and public pensions at a virtual meeting of fiscal journalists, at the Ravitch Fiscal Reporting Program at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York.
- Discussed potential implications of COVID-19 for state and local government finances with the *Wall Street Journal*, *Politico*, and fivethirtyeight.com.
- Worked with the Open Source Policy Center on methods for developing state weights for national tax microdata files.

Jason DeBacker
Jason is an Associate Professor of economics at the University of South Carolina and a core maintainer of the open source models Cost-of-Capital-Calculator and OG–USA, which model business taxes and macroeconomic effects of tax policy, respectively.

- Presented "Tax Noncompliance and Measures of Income Inequality" at the National Tax Association's Spring Symposium.
- Released version 0.6.2 of OG-USA, which includes updates to output plots and tables and some bug fixes.

Richard Evans
Richard is Advisory Board Visiting Fellow at the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, Associate Director and Senior Lecturer at the University of Chicago M.A. Program in Computational Social Science, Director of the Open Source Economics Laboratory, and President of OpenRG. He is also a core maintainer of [OG-USA](#), a macroeconomic model for fiscal policy analysis in the U.S.

- Evans posted a [dynamic visualization](#) of the performance of the Dow Jones Industrial Average over the last 15 recessions, from the Great Depression to the current COVID-19 recession. This shows the dramatic impact of the current pandemic on financial markets. The interactive visualization will be updated from time to time, but the source code is available on GitHub.

Anderson Frailey
Anderson is a Research Associate with the Open Source Policy Center at the American Enterprise Institute and a core maintainer of the open source [TaxData](#) project, which cleans and prepares tax data for use in microsimulation tax models.

- Finished his first year in the economics PhD program at the University of Virginia.

Weifeng Zhong
Weifeng is a Senior Research Fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. Weifeng is a core maintainer of the open-source [PCI-China](#) and [PCI-Crackdown](#) models.

- The PCI-Crackdown resumed [tracking](#) the latest Hong Kong protests and the possibility of a violent crackdown by China.
- Continued to develop the new PCI-Outbreak project, which aims at estimating the severity of COVID-19 in China based on how its official media covered the pandemic.
- Discussed the PCI projects and COVID-19 in China in the American Legislative Exchange Council podcast's [podcast](#), Across the States.
- [Recent paper](#) with Julian Chan, "The 'Value' of Propaganda: Machine Predictions of Rare Events Based on Text Data," will appear as the lead article in the forthcoming issue of the *Yale Journal of International Affairs*.
- Presented the PCI projects at the International Society for Data Science and Analytics [annual meeting](#).