



October 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.

- Prepared draft guidebook for policymakers on public pension risk-sharing policy options, with colleagues Gang Chen and Yimeng Yin.
 - Conducted initial webinar for a project to develop public pension policy options for deeply distressed plans, with colleague Josh McGee.
 - Prepared draft report for Manhattan Institute on potential impact of Covid-19-related tax-base erosion on New York City tax revenue.
 - Analyzed changes in effective federal income tax rates between 2017 and 2018 in New York and other states based upon recently released [IRS summary data](#), for New York State Comptroller.
 - Embarked on a project to develop a tax microdata file for New York and selected other states, for purposes of analyzing the regional impacts of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.
 - Continued to develop improved methods to reweight microdata files and to apportion national weights across states or other geographic regions, with considerable gains in speed and robustness.
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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.

- Added to OG-USA calibration: the ability to model earners at the very top and to allow for heterogeneous discount factors (as in [Carroll et al. \(2017\)](#)).

- Updated and moved Cost-of-Capital documentation to a Jupyter Book format. Available at pslmodels.github.io/Cost-of-Capital-Calculator
 - Interviewed about [PSL Models](#) for the [Virtual Global Village](#) podcast
 - Cost-of-Capital-Calculator cited in [Hoover Institution study by Fitzgerald, Hassett, Kallen, and Mulligan](#).
 - OG-USA and Cost-of-Capital-Calculator used in [AEI Report by Kyle Pomerleau](#) on Biden's tax plan.
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Anderson Frailey

Anderson is an economics PhD student at the University of Virginia and a core maintainer of the open source [TaxData](#) and [Tax-Brain](#) projects.

- Released [Tax-Brain](#) 2.4.0
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Jonathan Pycroft

Jon is an economic modeler and public finance economist based in Seville, Spain. He has experience building and working with computable general equilibrium models, overlapping generations models, and microsimulation models of tax and pension policies in Europe and Africa.

- Added to the OG-USA testing suite: checking that the example simulation files run.
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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](#), [PCI-Crackdown](#), and [PCI-Outbreak](#) models.

- The PCI project was presented at the [NLP Summit](#), [CyFy](#) conference, the Association of Chinese Political Studies' [annual meeting](#), and the [International Symposium on Forecasting](#).
- Published blog post "What can artificial intelligence tell us about the scale of Covid-19 in China?" with the [Observer Research Foundation](#).