

# A.A. Markov, Markov Chains, and Google



**Public Lecture**

**Date:** Thursday 24 August 2006, 6pm

**Place:** Eastern Avenue Lecture Theatre  
The University of Sydney  
(adjacent to the Carlaw Building,  
City Road entrance)

Andrei Andreevich Markov was born 14th June, 1856, in Ryazan, Imperial Russia, and died 20th July, 1922, in Petrograd (St. Petersburg). The year 2006 marks not only the 150th anniversary of his birth, but also the 100th anniversary of his first paper on what came to be called Markov chains. These have an enormous range of modelling applications, ranging from sociology to theoretical physics, inasmuch as they allow in a simple way for dependence over time in a randomly evolving process.

The lecture, accompanied by pictorial transparencies, will deal lightly with Markov's times, the controversial motivation ("free will") for his construction of a simple Markov chain ("dependent coin tossing"), and how page links, brought up on the computer screen by a query to the Google search engine, are ranked according to size of entries of the stationary distribution of a Markov chain.

**Speaker:**

Emeritus Professor Eugene Seneta, FAA  
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