



# Thinking Outside the Box Score

The image below is a mathematical representation of the styles of all the players (represented by dots) in the NBA. The warmer colors signify outstanding performance in a skill, such as rebounding, while the line segments connect players with similar performance in several skills. Combining an area of mathematics generally thought of as very abstract—topology—with statistics, researchers were able to show that there are actually ten significant positions on a basketball team, rather than the usual five. It could be a while before this innovative approach takes hold, though, because coaches and teams tend towards the traditional, sticking with what has worked in the past. But taking advantage of this new information, which describes how the game is played today, is a slam dunk.

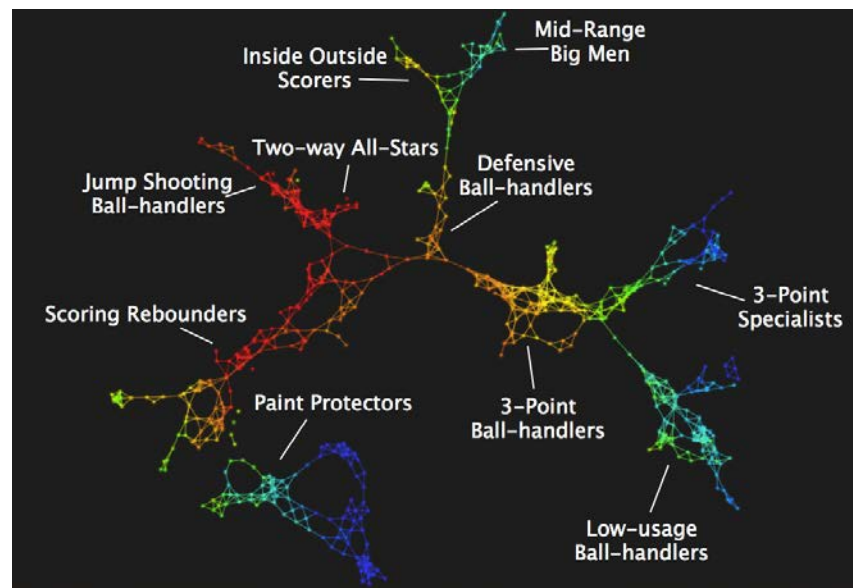


Image courtesy of Ayasdi, Inc.

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