

Call for Papers

Special Section: Platform-Dependent Entrepreneurship on Digital Platforms: Business Models, Strategies, and Ecosystem Dynamics

Industrial and Corporate Change

September 1, 2020 –Submission Deadline

Guest Editors

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Online digital platforms are transforming the environment within which firms and entire industries operate. Until recently, the entrepreneurship and business strategy literatures paid less attention to the impact these platforms will have on entrepreneurship and business (Cutolo and Kenney 2019; Nambisan, 2017; Nambisan, Wright, Feldman, 2019). With some recent exceptions (Curchod et al. 2019; Wen and Zhu 2019; Zhu 2019, Zhu and Liu 2018), research and theorizing is only now recognizing the fundamental differences between *traditional* and *platform-dependent entrepreneurship*. This lack of attention is surprising, because seemingly every day, new instances of the ways in which platform firms exert power over their ecosystem members are reported in the media² – an industry that itself is struggling with the implications of the platform economy (Kenney and Zysman 2016). **Our Special Section solicits articles examining the platform-complementor relationships with particular emphasis on the dynamics that platform complementors or platform-dependent entrepreneurs (PDEs) experience** (Cutolo and Kenney 2019; Nambisan and Baron 2019).

Platforms are dependent upon attracting complementors to their ecosystems (Autio et al. 2018; Cusumano et al. 2019; Gawer 2014; Jacobides et al. 2018; Parker et al. 2016). And yet, there is a fundamental power asymmetry between the platform owner and platform-dependent businesses. Businesses dependent upon a platform to access customers often experience a new Knightian uncertainty as the platform owner can unilaterally change any of its operational rules (Cutolo and Kenney 2019). Further, given that digital platforms enable firms to cross national and regional boundaries easily, the implications of such power asymmetry extend to international entrepreneurship too (Nambisan, Zahra, and Luo, 2019).

¹ When Martin and Satish started exploring the idea for this special issue in early 2019, Mike Wright joined them and became a key supporter of the idea. Unfortunately, Mike passed away recently. This special issue is dedicated in his honor.

² For example, see a recent [NY Times report](#) and a [Washington Post report](#)

There have been increasing concerns by policy-makers and regulators about the ability for platforms to develop oligopsony/oligopoly-like relationships with their complementors were first articulated by Lina Khan (2016) regarding Amazon's relationship with its Marketplace sellers. In May 2019, the US Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission began preliminary investigations into Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google regarding their use of their positions to illegally affect competition. Similarly, European Union competition authorities are investigating anti-competitive behavior on the part of various platforms. In many respects, platforms have become private regulators of complementors in their ecosystems (Boudreau and Hagui 2009). We encourage papers that address the sources and dynamics of how platforms and complementors manage such private regulation.

Potential submission topics

- In what ways have digital platforms transformed the practice of entrepreneurship?
- Who is an entrepreneur in a platform-organized market, e.g., Uber driver, DtoC business owner, YouTube influencer, Airbnb landlord, app writer? In what ways have digital platforms redefined the concept of an 'entrepreneur'?
- How does a platform's legitimacy affect entrepreneurs? What are the strategies by which they could shift legitimacy from the platform to themselves?
- How do platforms use technical (APIs and SDKs) and contractual (terms and conditions) aspects of their platforms to manage PDEs?
- How does the relationship between the platform and PDEs shift in the life-cycle of a platform?
- How do these dependencies vary with the type of digital platform and associated ecosystem?
 - What are the implications of these dependencies for (a) entrepreneurs; (b) platform owners; (c) regulators; (d) platform users/customers?
- Complementor strategy in digital platform ecosystems:
 - What are the strategies (e.g., multihoming, establishing physical stores) that dependent entrepreneurs deploy to manage their dependencies on digital platforms?
 - How do dependent entrepreneurs ensure their continued survival and success in a platform environment – one within which platform owners' strategic moves may redefine market parameters?
 - What are the costs and benefits of being dependent upon a digital platform? How should entrepreneurs evaluate these costs/benefits when making (a) product/market decisions and (b) personal life-style decisions?
 - How does the platform's strategies towards its entrepreneur/complementors change as it achieves lock-in?
 - How do complementors use a platform's legitimacy in their own entrepreneurial strategies?
- How are digital platforms transforming industries and markets, and thereby, the nature of entrepreneurship in them?
- How does a platform's architecture and ecosystem governance promote/constrain entrepreneurship?
- What are the regulatory and other public policy implications of platform-based 'dependent entrepreneurship'? What will be the impacts of antitrust and other governmental oversight of digital platforms on the entrepreneurs?
- What have been the impacts of digital platforms on entrepreneurship and economic development in cities and regions? What is the role of local/regional institutions in promoting entrepreneurship in the context of PDEs?

DATES:

- September 1, 2020 -- Submission deadline
- September 30, 2020 -- Initial decision on desk-rejection
- December 15, 2020 – First round of reviews completed
- March 30, 2021 – Revisions due
- June 30, 2021 – Second round of reviews completed (with either rejects or conditional accepts)
- August 30, 2021 – Revisions due and final decision made
- Publication – Early 2022

SUBMISSIONS:

Important: When submitting your manuscript, be sure to choose the Berkeley office option on the ICC submission site and clearly indicate that the submission is for this Special Issue.

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