

October 22, 2016

Hi Dr Healy,

Subject: Application to attend NBER Project on the Economics of Digitization Meeting

I am Ratib M Ali, a graduate student in my fourth year of study in the economics program at Boston College. I believe attending the meeting will enhance my understanding of the digitization literature, which in turn will aid my own research.

Please find a summary of my course of study and general research interest below.

Thanking you,

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Course of study pursued:

- Graduate student, Dept of Economics, Boston College, September 2013 – present
- Master of Arts in Economics, Boston College, December 2015 (GPA 3.56)

Fields of study (two elective fields mandatory):

- Industrial Organization:
 - Course 1 (Dr Julie Mortimer), Fall 2014
 - Course 2 (Dr Michael Grubb), Spring 2015
- Microeconomic Theory:
 - Matching Theory and Market Design (Dr Tayfun Sonmez), Fall 2014
 - Distributive Justice (Dr Uzi Segal), Fall 2014
 - Game Theory and Applications (Dr Mehmet Ekmekci), Spring 2015
- Other graduate electives taken:
 - Two courses in Development Economics, one in Labor Economics

General Research Interest:

Currently, I am interested in the impact of DOJ-mandated asset divestiture (in an industry where the asset has a proportional and one-to-one relationship with capacity (i.e. the asset provides a binding upper limit on capacity) following mergers. Specifically, I want to study the impact of slot divestiture at Reagan National Airport (a slot-constrained airport) as a pre-condition for approving the merger between US Airways and American Airlines in 2013.

Relevant markets of study would involve three classes: (1) directly affected markets, which use Reagan Airport; (2) secondary markets, which may or may not connect through Reagan Airport, and (3) unrelated markets, which are unlikely to be affected by any changes at Reagan Airport (like markets on the West Coast) but still will display effects of the merger.

This project should combine two closely-related strands of literature: mergers with asset divestitures (the merger between US Airways and American Airlines), and entry (by airlines who acquired the divested slots).

I also want to juxtapose this merger to previous mergers, like the one between Republic Airlines and Northwest Airlines in 1986, to draw comparisons between the demand technologies during 1986 (travel agent being the information gatekeeper) and 2013 (most information obtained online), and how those differences change the impact of a merger in the airline industry.

A committee has not been formed.