

## Application for NBER Digitization Tutorial March 2015

I'm Xuezhen Tao, a third year Economics PhD candidate from University of Maryland, College Park. My past two years are spent on both general training (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Econometric theory), and field specific training in Industrial Organization and Microeconomics, which covers both theoretical and empirical training: I've learned Game Theory, Auction Theory and Matching in Micro Theory sequence, IO Theory, Firm and Contract theory in IO Theory sequence, and empirical IO estimation, computational economics as a strengthening of structural estimation skills. With these courses and a grade of excellence in field exam of Industrial Organization, I've satisfied all the requirements for taking IO as my major, theoretical Micro as my minor and now I'm already a PhD candidate.

My current research interest is mostly focused on calibrating online consumption behavior and measuring its welfare changes relative to traditional off-line business. When consumers can easily switch between websites to compare prices and different purchase options, say rent a book, or even purchase an e-book instead of a paperback, they are more likely to be experienced which, however, doesn't guarantee higher consumer surplus: online merchants can also utilize informational advantage and exploit more extensive price discrimination, like more frequent edition updates, more detailed product differentiation, etc., which in turn can extract more consumer's benefit. Mainstream opinions usually back up the arrival of IT age with faster flow, broader range and lower cost of information transmission, and my research is dedicated to show a more comprehensive image: firms can also benefit in this era by offering finely designed product menus, more efficient advertisement, more exclusive and personalized bundling, to stay in a better position.

I'd very much appreciate this opportunity to meet other like-minded researchers in this digitization tutorial and learn more about this young frontier.

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