Application for the NBER project on the Economics of Digitization Workshop
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Description of course of study:
- Fields of Concentration:
    o Behavioral Economics, sub-focus on belief formation
    o Theory, sub-focus on contracts and organizations
- Year in the program: 4th
- Advisers: Oliver Hart and Andrei Shleifer

General Research Interests:
- Internet Economics: I am interested in the Internet both as a powerful laboratory setting in which to study consumer behavior, and as an important and growing market in its own right. I believe that Internet, and especially browser, datasets have the potential to push behavioral consumer theory forward by allowing researchers to observe micro-behavior of consumers. For example, the setting allows us to observe detailed information about how consumers decide on purchases: the options they consider, how long they consider them, and when they search for more information, and so on.
    o My second year paper was an experimental design for testing theories of attention in the context of the consumption of Internet content and on-line shopping. My goal was to research how websites are able to capture and hold consumers' attention in the short-run. I wanted to understand how "sticky" attention is: does exposure to ideas or images dramatically change short-run browsing behavior, controlling for the information content? I pursued working with Microsoft browsing data but conversations with their research team have convinced me to redesign the project.
    o I interned at eBay during the summer after my 2nd year and I developed an interest in e-commerce platform design. I worked on designing feedback and reputation systems. I am interested in platform design as well as the role of personalization, such as Netflix' movie recommendation engine.
- Behavioral Contracts: I am interested in how contractual relationships are mediated by expectations, reference points, and shading. I am designing a laboratory experiment that simulates a labor market to study the role of communication and expectation in how workers react to wage cuts. The morale hypothesis of nominal wage rigidity argues that employers refuse to cut wages in recessions because the cost of increased worker dissatisfaction outweighs the benefits. My question is whether or not workers would shade

their effort as much if they expected wage to be contingent on the state of the world before signing the labor contract.

- Media: I have a couple of laboratory experiments in media.
    - One studies the role of "false equivalence" in news reporting. My co-author and I investigate how the reporting of two conflicting signals (one from each side of an issue) affects how consumers update their beliefs. There is some motivational evidence that this format has an outsized impact on the size of the belief update, and we hypothesize that this may be due to inferences about the trustworthiness of the news outlet, or about cognitive engagement.
    - In another experiment, I investigate to what extent consumers interpretation of the news is determined by an "us-versus-them" mentality. More specifically, I try to parse to what extent we tend to believe agents who self-identify in the same groups as us, e.g. the same political party, because we trust that person's opinion more or because we have a taste for believing them.