

JORDAN OU

Course of Study:

I am a fifth year Ph.D. candidate in Economics at UC Berkeley. My coursework includes field courses and exams in Industrial Organization (theoretical, empirical, and structural); Psychology and Economics (theory and empirical); and Public Finance (theory and empirical). I have also taken courses in game theory, mechanism design, contract and auction theory, economic history, and applied econometrics. My major areas of focus are industrial organization and behavioral economics, with minors in public finance, mechanism design, and contract and auction theory.

General Research Interests:

While I have broad research interests in structural IO and behavioral economics, I am particularly interested in such applications in the areas of e-Commerce, Internet, retail, and transportation. As a research assistant for Stefano DellaVigna, I analyzed browsing and consumption behavior on Netflix to find relevant movie matches for a broader project on media company mergers and biased movie reviews. In my two summers as an economist intern at eBay Research, I worked with Steve Tadelis, Tom Blake, and Kane Sweeney on a variety of projects in e-Commerce. Examples include the effects of sniping on customer churn rates; fee and tax salience for tickets on StubHub; and the role of prices as signals in bargaining.

The following briefly detail several projects in progress. I have proposed them to my dissertation committee, which consists of Stefano DellaVigna, Benjamin Handel, Kei Kawai, and Steven Tadelis (contact information on second page). My expected date of completion is May 2017.

“Inertia, Fee Sensitivity, and Firm Response to Contract Design Changes: Evidence from Online Retailers on eBay”

Using detailed transaction data from eBay Marketplaces, I investigate how firms learn about market demand and the value of contracts. I find that online retailers exhibit inertia in contract choices; such choices, which influence profitability for selling on eBay, are ex-post inefficient about 35% of the time. Additionally, sellers are sensitive to a fee paid to list an item. I model the inertia and sensitivity in the seller’s objective function and find that eBay’s optimized contract design is similar to their actual policy change. I also show that welfare for consumers and sellers both increase as a result, and the marketplace platform grows as well, both in turns of item and gross merchandise volume.

“What’s in my Inventory? Rational Inattention and Dynamic Learning on eBay”

This paper examines why online retailers on eBay list their inventories in a substantially different manner after a contract design change. I find evidence that sellers have incomplete information on their own inventory prior to the change. Moreover, I find that there is a cost to obtaining such information, and that sellers do not pay attention to such signals unless it is profitable to do so. I propose a structural model to estimate the cost of learning about their inventories.

“Reference point updating: Evidence from Yelp.com” (w/ Lauren Falcao)

We investigate the use of reference points in evaluating the quality of restaurants. In a sample of 700 restaurants around the Bay Area, we find that an increase of one star (out of five) in the previously visited restaurant led to a subsequent decrease of 0.2 stars in the subsequent rating. We conclude that reviewers update their reference points after each visit and evaluate the next place using the previous restaurant as the benchmark.

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Education:

Ph.D. Economics, University of California, Berkeley 2011-

Primary Advisors: Stefano DellaVigna, Benjamin Handel

Secondary Advisors: Kei Kawai, Steven Tadelis

Sc.B. Applied Mathematics-Economics, Brown University 2007-2011

Highest Latin Honors

Honors thesis: "Demographic Trends in Criminal Offenses in the United States"

References:

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Professor Benjamin Handel
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Professor Kei Kawai
Department of Economics
University of California, Berkeley
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Research Experience:

Economist Intern, eBay Research Labs	Sum 2013, 2014
Research Assistant for Stefano DellaVigna, UC Berkeley	2012-2014
Research Assistant for Kenneth Chay, Brown University	2009-2011
Research Assistant for Kaivan Munshi, Brown University	2009-2011
Research Assistant for Steven Levitt, The University of Chicago	Sum 2009

Research Grants:

Graduate Division Summer Research Grant, UC Berkeley	2012
Chase Manhattan Research Grant, Brown University	2009-2011

Awards and Honors:

Doctoral Completion Fellowship, UC Berkeley	2015
Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, UC Berkeley	2015
Departmental Fellowship, UC Berkeley	2011-2014
Sidney Frank Full-Ride Scholarship, Brown University	2007-2011
National Merit Scholarship	2007