Electronic Markets – The International Journal on Networked Business

Call for Papers

Research Advances in Multi-sided Platforms

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Theme
Multi-sided platforms (MSPs) have been around for several centuries. Only recently, however, MSPs have become prominent in the economy. MSPs connect two or more interdependent user or customer groups, and support interactions and transactions among them. Platform users in one group are more likely to join when more members of the other group use the platform. For example, the growth of the number of potential buyers can make the platform more attractive to additional sellers. These sellers can improve the level of service by extending the product portfolio on the platform, making it even more interesting to buyers, thus producing a self-reinforcing effect. However, these network effects are usually difficult to achieve in practice. Therefore, more research should be conducted to improve our understanding of them.

There is a growing interest in MSPs in the scholarly literature. This is due to two key factors. First, platforms play an important role throughout the economy, as they minimize transactions costs between market sides. Second, MSPs appear to be the most powerful business models in the digital economy due to their potential for enabling value capture and rapid scale-up. Airbnb, eBay, Uber, Google, and Apple are spectacular success examples of MSPs. Such businesses have demonstrated remarkable growth and achieved high financial valuations. According to a recent study, more than 30 firms operating multi-sided platforms are currently valued at more than a billion dollars. Nevertheless, despite many companies opting for MSP business models, to date only a few have been successful. Consequently, there is a need for understanding the factors that enable MSPs to thrive. For instance, getting the first set of users to affiliate with the platform is a key challenge for MSPs. In the presence of indirect network effects, users on one side join only when there are sufficient numbers and quality of users on the other side, leading to a situation where “no one joins until everyone joins”. Strategies for resolving such “chicken-and-egg” problems still require further theoretical and empirical investigation.

The success of MSPs depends on several economic and technological factors, which need to be examined in detail. For instance, the value propositions offered to every side of the platform, the easiness by which users can connect to it, and the platform’s fundamental services are critical determinants of platform success. Thus, platform launch should be supported by mechanisms and strategies as well as technological solutions enabling MSPs to embark on a self-reinforcing path in order to achieve sustainable growth. This special issue invites original contributions that capture best practices and advance the state of the art, thus contributing to better understand the economic mechanisms and technological solutions propelling MSPs to succeed. We also seek to provide valuable advice and support for practitioners wishing to develop successful MSPs. We encourage researchers to submit papers with an economic and/or technological focus.
Central issues and topics
Possible topics of submissions include, but are not limited to:

* Technological challenges and solutions of multi-sided platforms
* Technological infrastructure for multi-sided platforms
* Big data and machine learning in the context of multi-sided platforms
* Technological solutions for building multi-sided platform ecosystems
* The economics of multi-sided platforms
* Multi-sided platform case studies in specific sectors, such as logistics, health care, etc.
* Success factors and design principles of multi-sided platforms
* Exploration of multi-sided platforms as digital business models
* User behavior on platforms and incentives to all parties
* Factors creating network effects on multi-sided platform
* Value capture strategies on multi-sided platforms
* Potential for service innovation with multi-sided platforms

We encourage contributions with a broad range of methodological approaches – conceptual, qualitative and quantitative. All papers should be within the scope of Electronic Markets (http://www.electronicmarkets.org/about-em/scope/) and We encourage contributions with a broad range of methodological approaches, including conceptual, qualitative and quantitative research. All papers should fit the scope of Electronic Markets (for more information see http://www.electronicmarkets.org/about-em/scope/) and will undergo a double-blind peer review process. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the special issue, please contact the guest editors.

Submission
Electronic Markets is a SSCI-listed journal (IF 1.864) and requires that all papers must be original and not published or under review elsewhere. Papers must be submitted via our electronic submission system at http://elma.edmgr.com and conform to Electronic Markets publication standards (see instructions and templates at http://www.electronicmarkets.org/authors). Please note that the preferred article length is around 8,000 words.

Important deadline
* Submission Deadline: February 28, 2018