

## **Call for Papers** **Digital Two-Sided Platforms** **Unveiling Research and Business Opportunities**

*Special Issue Guest Editors*

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### **Purpose**

This special issue calls for the submission of conceptual and empirical studies that tackle the specificities presented by digital platforms. We seek contributions that offer insights into process, organizational, individual, network or technological level on how platform-based digital businesses transform the theories, models and managerial practices.

### **Aim**

*“How can a major business segment be invaded and conquered in a matter of months by an upstart with none of the resources traditionally deemed essential for survival, let alone market dominance? And why is this happening today in one industry after another? The answer is the power of the **platform**—a **new business model** that uses **technology** to **connect** people, organizations, and resources in an interactive **ecosystem** in which amazing amounts of value can be created and exchanged.”*

(Parker, Van Alstyne and Choudary, *Platform Revolution*, 2016)

This quote refers to companies such as Uber, Airbnb, BlaBlaCar that over the last years had a significant impact on the market. Those digital platforms are challenging established companies and approach a market with different business models, marketing philosophy, and supply chain configuration, all of which challenges decades of management research.

Yet, the business configuration behind these companies has a long history in the economic literature known as two-sided platforms. A two-sided platform (or formerly a two-sided market) is a business “*in which one or several platforms enable interactions between end-users, and try to get the two (or multiple) sides ‘on board’ by appropriately charging each side*” (Rochet and Tirole, 2006, p. 645). In other words, these businesses act as match-makers between two (or more) different but interconnected groups of customers: travelers and hosts for Airbnb or riders and drivers for Uber, creating indirect network effects (Katz and Shapiro, 1985).

The peculiarities of this market structure have been investigated over the last two decades in the economic literature. In particular, specific attention has been devoted to the pricing mechanisms and the role of the network externalities (Rochet and Tirole, 2006; Parker and Van Alstyne, 2005). The more recent literature highlights how the resource configuration behind these businesses is significantly different from the companies based on linear value chains (Amit and Zott, 2015) or how the development process can be particularly challenging (Perks et al., 2017). Furthermore, these companies need to design and manage complex business models based on a double value proposition (Muzellec et al., 2015), requiring to bring on board different kinds of customers at the same time to avoid the chicken-and-egg paradox (Strummer et al., 2018).

Two-sided platforms have also been used to describe a wide array of situations, being flexible to numerous configurations (Tauscher and Laudien, 2018) - for example having end users on both sides, or having consumers on one side and businesses on the other. The same structure has also been used to unveil the opportunities of digital services, opening new avenues to foster business model innovation (Trabucchi et al., 2017, 2018).

Innovation scholars leveraged this concept mainly to deal with users' community and open innovation projects (e.g., Parmentier and Gandia, 2013; Wang et al., 2018) or dealing with the sharing economy phenomenon (Richter et al., 2017).

In particular, this call for papers aims to explore and exploit the opportunities related to multi-sided platforms, which are being boosted by digital technologies (such as mobile apps or the blockchain) and cultural trends (such as sharing or gig economy). Indeed, there is the need for rigorous and theoretically relevant research, being also practice based, in order to enhance the knowledge for all the players (scholars, practitioners, policy makers) involved in this innovative business models. Therefore, this call for papers aims to enlarge the discussion on the topic from a managerial perspective, embracing mainly an innovation perspective, to dig into the distinctiveness of multi-sided digital platforms.

### **Focus**

In this special issue, we welcome both conceptual and empirical studies, using a wide variety of methods. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

#### *Process level*

- How to design and implement a platform-based digital business model?
- How does the development of a platform-based digital business differ from a traditional product-based one?
- What is the life-cycle perspective of two-sided digital businesses?
- What are the key peculiarities of the different lifecycle phases (design, start-up, scale-up, mature stage etc.)?
- How to manage ambidexterity and tensions between the multiple sides?

#### *Organizational level*

- What are the challenges and opportunities of creating a multi-sided digital platform?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of managing a multi-sided digital platform?
- How to transform traditional business models in a digital ecosystem and platform-based perspective?
- Which forms of leadership are needed to manage these complex ecosystems of relationships?
- Which organizational forms are suitable to manage such businesses?

#### *Individual level*

- What are the motivational drivers of either side for joining the platform?
- How those motivational drivers differ between the two sides?
- How do customers perceive the complementary (or contradictory?) value propositions proposed by the platform for each side?
- How can we assess the value appropriation by users and customers, with regards to the value proposition?

#### *Network level*

- How to collaborate across organizations with similar or different business models?
- How those multi-sided digital platforms enhance the foundations of business ecosystems literature?
- What is the role of coopetition dynamics in such digital environments?
- What is the role of multi-sided platforms in the emergence of business ecosystems?

#### *Technological level*

- What is the role of User Generated Big Data in such an environment?
- How the mobile and App economy revise our understanding of multi-sided business models?
- What may be the impact of emerging technologies (e.g., blockchain, deep-learning and IA) on these digital business configurations?

### **Submission Deadline and Review Process**

The deadline for the submission of full papers is **31st August 2019**.

All submissions should follow the author guidelines for CIM as published on the Journal website, see <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14678691>. For any further information, please visit the Journal website or contact the special issue guest editors.

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