Application to NBER Economics of Digitization Tutorial, March 2019

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Course of Study:

I am a fourth-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Economics at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. My primary field is Industrial Organization. During my studies, I completed the full sequence of IO classes taught by Alan Sorensen and Lorenzo Magnolfi. I have two minors: Econometrics (taught by Bruce Hansen, Jack Porter, and Joachim Freyberger) and Macroeconomics (taught by Dean Corbae, Enghin Atalay and Noah Williams). In the first year of my studies, I completed the full core sequence of Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Econometrics.

Currently, I am attending a research course in empirical IO taught by Jean-François Houde and Alan Sorensen and also participating in a reading group in Machine Learning organized by Joachim Freyberger. My main advisors are Alan Sorensen, Kenneth Hendricks, and Jean-François Houde.

Research interests/projects:

Within the fields of industrial organization and the economics of digitization, I am especially interested in studying search, the impact of digital platforms, and the mechanisms these platforms employ to alleviate search frictions and promote economic efficiency. I believe that the NBER Digitization Tutorial would be a great opportunity for me to engage with faculty and fellow students who are interested in similar areas of research. I am currently working on a project that is tightly related to these topics.

I am interested in understanding how search frictions can be reduced using new types of marketplaces. To answer this question, I obtained access to a unique proprietary dataset from an online taxi aggregator inDriver, which is a digital platform that originated in Russia and is currently present in 10 countries and more than 140 cities. In comparison with some traditional online taxi platforms like Uber, Lift, etc., inDriver does not set up the prices to match passengers with the drivers and does not allocate drivers. Instead, it runs a structured online negotiation between the passengers and the drivers. My data are rich and contain the universe of actions run on the platform, along with detailed information on all participants. I am currently exploring whether this platform improves efficiency to the market by alleviating search frictions and how this decentralized mechanism performs in comparison with more centralized systems like Uber.

Digitization Tutorial would be an ideal place for me to discuss my research with like-minded faculty and students. I would very much appreciate if you consider my application. I look forward to hearing from you.