John McKeon

PhD Candidate · Strategy & Innovation

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Education

Boston University, Questrom School of Business — *Boston, MA*
PhD, Strategy & Innovation — *2020 - present*

Boston University, Questrom School of Business — *Boston, MA*
BS, Business Administration — *2011 - 2015*
- Concentration in Finance, Minor in Economics

Research Interests

Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Digitization, Startup Strategy, Intellectual Property

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Papers

Watson, Jeremy and MacGarvie, Megan and **McKeon, John** (2023). It Was Fifty Years Ago Today: Recording Copyright Term and the Supply of Music. *Management Science 69(1)*, 351-376.

Cockburn, Iain and MacGarvie, Megan and **McKeon, John** (2023). Canada's Patent-Productivity Paradox: Recent Trends and Implications for Future Growth. *International Productivity Monitor 45, 120-154.*

Works in Progress

** working titles*

"Startup Repositioning in Response to Rival Acquisitions"
Data Analysis Phase

"Valuing Pharmaceutical Patent Thickets" (with Felix Poege, Tim Simcoe)
Preparing Working Paper

"Innovation Under Resource Constraints: Supercomputing in Scientific Research" (with Justine Boudou)
Preparing Working Paper

Presentations

Invited Talks

2023: East Coast Doctoral Conference, New York; Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Boston (Symposium Organizer)

Workshop Participation

2023: NBER Digitization Tutorial (San Francisco), Strategy Science Doctoral Workshop (Munich)

2022: NBER Economics of Privacy Tutorial (Boston)

Teaching Experience

Fall 2022	**SI422: Strategy, Innovation, and Global Competition (Undergraduate)**, Teaching Assistant	*Boston University*
Winter 2021, Fall 2021	**SI845: Technology Strategy (MBA)**, Teaching Assistant	*Boston University*
2013 – 2015	**SM222: Modeling Business Decisions and Market Outcomes (Undergraduate)**, Teaching Assistant	*Boston University*

Awards, Fellowships, & Grants

2020-Present	**Questrom Doctoral Fellowship**, Boston University

Professional Experience

2015-2020	**Managing Consultant**, Edgeworth Economics

Personal

Distance running, football, music

Letter of Recommendation submitted by: Tim Simcoe, Boston University

List of PhD Coursework:

Economic Methods Courses:

Microeconomic Theory

Advanced Microeconomic Theory

Introduction to Mathematical Economics

Advanced Statistics

Advanced Econometrics I

Methods for Causal Inference in Strategy Research

Topics in Industrial Organization

Economic Model for Business Research

Innovation-focused Seminars:

Research Seminar in Technology Strategy and Innovation

Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives on Entrepreneurship [HBS]

Economics of Ideas, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship [MIT]

Empirical Studies of Innovation and Digitization [HBS]

Other:

Foundations of Strategy [HBS]

Philosophy of Science and Research

Field Studies Seminar

Seminar on Macro Organizational Theory

My research focuses on the role that competitive dynamics play in a firm's innovation strategy, with a particular focus on the dynamics between large incumbents and nascent startups. I study this topic from two different angles. In one stream, I study how startup acquisitions impact the innovation and positioning of technology startups. In a second stream, I focus on the role that intellectual property plays in allowing firms to gain a competitive advantage over rivals and appropriate returns from innovation.

My first stream studies how changes to the competitive landscape affect the strategic decisions of growth-oriented startups. More specifically, I study how startup acquisitions shape incentives and strategic decisions of existing [non-acquired] startups in the market. While economists often study the effects of acquisitions on the acquired firm, there has been less attention on effects onto non-acquired rivals of the acquired startup (or "spillovers"), which adds an often-overlooked dimension to recent antitrust debates. In solo-authored work, I ask *what is the effect of startup acquisitions on the positioning of rival startups? Do they move closer or further to the acquired rival?* This question offers insights to the entrepreneurial strategy literature and speaks to downstream implications of proposed increased antitrust scrutiny of acquisitions of nascent competition. Theory offers competing predictions. On one hand, acquisitions reveal nascent demand on the product market and imply future demand on the acquisition market, driving rivals to reposition closer to the acquired startup. On the other hand, the acquired startup now can scale quickly and the incumbent has potentially entered as a competitor, incentivizing rivals to reposition away from the acquired startup. To study this question, I construct a novel panel dataset of software startups, scraping text from their websites and applying machine learning techniques to measure distance between rivals. I apply a matched difference-in-differences strategy to attain baseline estimates and then explore heterogeneous reaction to the acquisition of a rival by market- and firm-level factors. In other early-stage work in this stream, I am collecting data for a paper that studies how a recent policy shift that made it more difficult for firms to exit via acquisition affected (a) acquisition activity and (b) the downstream rate and direction of entrepreneurial innovation. In future work, I also plan to study the effects of exit opportunities on startups' patenting strategy, VC investments, and firms' R&D project continuation decisions.

The second stream of my research focuses on intellectual property – how IP affects strategic decisions and private returns to innovation. Specifically, my paper in Management Science (joint with Jeremy Watson, Megan MacGarvie) studies how copyright expiry has differential effects on availability of music across physical and digital platforms. This work highlights how the negative effects of copyright protection on availability of music on physical platforms is potentially mitigated on digital streaming platforms such as Spotify. In a current working paper (joint with Felix Poege, Tim Simcoe), we ask how private and social valuations of patents change throughout stages of the drug development life cycle. Our core result shows that although the "social value" of patents decreases throughout the life cycle, the stock market reaction increases as uncertainty about a drug's launch is resolved. In future work in this stream, I plan to study how competition in pharmaceutical markets affects firms' strategic patenting and study further how digitization changes the way in which IP is used by firms.

I am looking to attend this boot camp to advance and improve my research agenda and to meet other doctoral students and faculty working on closely related topics. I've had the opportunity to take many innovation and strategy seminars, but have been less exposed to the core entrepreneurship literature. By attending this boot camp, I'm looking to ground my first stream of research in the entrepreneurship literature and generate related research ideas. My interests are very phenomenon driven, so the opportunity to think very precisely about both prior literature and frontier questions in a structured manner will allow my agenda to become more precise. Additionally, at this stage in my program, I am eager to meet and discuss research with other students and faculty working in this area. This will also help to improve my ideas, and hopefully create long-lasting and mutually beneficial relationships. Thank you for your consideration.

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February 10, 2024

Dear Organizers,

I write to recommend John McKeon for the 2024 NBER Entrepreneurship Boot Camp. Given his research interests, and his stage in the PhD program, John is positioned to benefit from this event and to be a valuable contributor.

John has several research projects related to the economics of innovation and entrepreneurial strategy. In particular, his likely job-market paper develops textual measures of firms copmetitve positioning (based on their web sites) and uses those measures to examine how startups respond to acquisitions of closely related firms. The ability to attend lectures and talk with other doctoral students and faculty working in this field will serve to further advance John's ideas and ongoing research in entrepreneurship-related topics.

John has taken a number of seminar courses in entrepreneurship and innovation at Boston-area schools, and he is well versed in the fundamentals of a variety of literatures in this area. This boot camp will allow John to continue to master these topics, and his prior experience will allow him to be an engaged, valuable contributor to these sessions.

Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions.

Best regards,



Timothy Simcoe
Professor of Strategy and Innovation
Questrom School of Business
Boston University