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Graduate Study

I am a sixth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Management Division at Columbia Business School, graduating in Spring 2026. My dissertation, *From Spark to Spotlight: Understanding the Lifecycle of Creative Ideas*, examines how ideas are generated, evaluated, and strategically presented across organizational contexts, including when AI is part of the process. My committee includes Sheena Iyengar (chair), Adam Galinsky, and Sandra Matz.

Research Interests and Projects

My research sits at the intersection of creativity, communication, and artificial intelligence. I study how people generate ideas, evaluate them, and strategically present them in organizational and entrepreneurial settings. Across this work, I aim to understand not just how AI expands the possibilities for ideation, but also how it alters the evaluative and communicative processes that determine which ideas survive.

I have several projects directly relevant to the digital economics and AI theme:

- **Published Work**: Horton, C. B., White, M. W., & Iyengar, S. S. (2023). *Bias against AI art can enhance perceptions of human creativity. Scientific Reports, 13(1), 19001.* https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-45202-3
  – This work shows how devaluing AI outputs can paradoxically heighten perceptions of human creativity, highlighting the comparative dynamics introduced by AI in creative markets.

- **Revise & Resubmit**: Horton, C. B., & Iyengar, S. S. *Breaking expectations: Leveraging unexpectedness enhances AI creativity.* (R&R at *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*)
  – This project identifies the "predictability disruption effect," showing that prompting AI for the *unexpected* rather than the *creative* systematically increases novelty and diversity in output, beyond what parameter settings alone can achieve.

- **Under Review**: Matz, S. C., Horton, C. B., & Goethals, S. *The basic b** effect: The use of LLM-based agents reduces the distinctiveness and diversity of people's choices.* (Under review at *Nature Human Behavior*; preprint: https://www.arxiv.org/pdf/2509.02910)
  – This research documents how the integration of LLM-based agents biases individual choices toward more common options, reducing distinctiveness and diversity in markets.

- **Working Paper (near submission)**: Horton, C. B. *The danger of "more creative": How AI revision narrows human expression.*
  – Using a dataset of 13,584 curated poems, this study shows that asking AI to revise texts to be "more creative" paradoxically homogenizes language, reducing semantic diversity.

Fit for Tutorial

Together, these projects form a cohesive research stream on how AI influences ideation, evaluation, and decision-making. My work bridges psychology, management, and economics by demonstrating how digital tools shape both individual behavior and market-level outcomes.

I am eager to participate in the NBER tutorial because it would sharpen my ability to translate these findings into conversations with economists working on digital markets and AI. The opportunity to interact with faculty and peers at the forefront of digital economics will also help me situate my dissertation in a broader intellectual context, as I prepare for the academic job market.