Application for NBER Digital Economics and AI Tutorial

February 11-12, 2026 | Stanford University

1. Contact Information

Name: Kimoon Jeong
Email: bxm2vk@virginia.edu
Phone: +1 (434) 833-6768
Address: Department of Economics, University of Virginia
Monroe Hall, 248 McCormick Rd, Charlottesville, VA 22903

2. Course of Graduate Study

I am a third-year Ph.D. student in Economics at the University of Virginia, with primary fields in **Industrial Organization** and **Econometrics**. I began the program in Fall 2023 and expect to finish by Spring 2028. Professor Federico Ciliberto recommended this application.

Beyond the first-year core sequence, my coursework includes: Industrial Organization I and II, Cross-Section Econometrics, Time Series Econometrics, Data-Rich Econometrics, and Numerical Methods in Economics. This training gives me the foundation for structural estimation, dynamic modeling, and computational approaches needed for research in digital markets.

3. Research Interests and Projects

My research focuses on **market consolidation and competition policy**, examining private equity roll-up strategies or serial acquisitions that reshape market structure across both traditional and digital industries. I use structural econometric methods to measure the competitive effects of sequential acquisitions and assess antitrust implications. My current work spans two projects that examine PE-driven consolidation in distinct competitive settings.

Project 1: Competing Against Amazon with Serial Acquisitions: Market Consolidation with FBA Brand Aggregators

This project, directly relevant to the tutorial's themes in **platform economics and algorithmic competition**, investigates Amazon FBA brand aggregators: PE-backed acquirers of small third-party sellers operating alongside Amazon and established brands. During 2020 to 2021, aggregators such as Thrasio, Razor Group, and SellerX raised over $12 billion to acquire hundreds of Amazon-native brands across categories including Home and Kitchen, Pet Supplies, and Health and Personal Care.

The central question addresses **competition against Amazon**: Does aggregator entry intensify competition against Amazon by professionalizing fragmented sellers, or does consolidation reduce competitive pressure within product niches? I examine how platform-specific factors (**algorithmic optimization, data analytics, advertising strategies, and review management**) create competitive advantages that enable aggregators to outperform independent sellers and compete with dominant players like Amazon. The project develops a dynamic oligopoly model with endogenous mergers to analyze how

platform-mediated consolidation affects market structure and consumer welfare. Using this framework, I can decompose the sources of aggregator success and assess whether their acquisitions generate efficiency gains or primarily increase market power. This research contributes to understanding how **data-driven strategies and AI-enabled tools backed by financial sponsors** reshape competition against dominant platforms, with implications for antitrust policy regarding "stealth consolidation" below regulatory thresholds.

Project 2: Penetrating Regional Market with Serial Acquisitions: Market Consolidation with Private Equity's Roll-up Strategy

My dissertation analyzes PE roll-ups in retail gasoline, where spatial competition governs firm behavior in regionally fragmented markets. I model how PE entrants with superior managerial expertise penetrate these markets through platform acquisitions, showing theoretically that operational efficiencies break hold-up problems and enable consolidation that dispersed incumbents cannot coordinate. Combining transaction data with location-level information from SafeGraph and wholesale price data from OPIS, I study how PE-backed consolidation affects local retail prices and market structure.

Motivation for Attending

The NBER Digital Economics and AI Tutorial is a valuable opportunity to learn about frontier research in **platform economics, algorithmic competition, and structural estimation**. I am particularly interested in: (1) methods for detecting and analyzing **algorithmic pricing** in digital marketplaces; (2) theoretical and empirical approaches to **multi-sided platform design** and competition with dominant players; and (3) **computational methods for large-scale structural estimation**. These topics directly inform my research on Amazon aggregators, where understanding how data advantages, algorithmic tools, and platform architecture shape competitive dynamics matters. Engaging with researchers in this area would strengthen both my methodological skills and the policy relevance of my work on digital market consolidation.