Developing Multi-sided DIGITAL PLATFORMS –
a business informatics perspective

Four of the five top market-cap firms in the world, viz. Apple, Alphabet, Amazon, and Facebook, achieve global dominance by virtue of their highly successful technology-based digital platforms. Newly emerged service-oriented digital platforms, such as AirBnB and Uber, are disrupting traditional hotel and taxi industries, respectively. Platforms are disrupting traditional industries. Unsurprisingly, therefore, leading global firms in “traditional” industries, such as GE and Toyota, are reinventing their businesses and transforming their products and services into digital platforms – to survive and hopefully thrive.

Platforms possess inherent capacities to attract, retain and grow ecosystems of entrepreneurial stakeholders, including users, developers and business firms, to co-create sustained value with each other. Platform ecosystems are complex socio-, economic-, and technical systems that can be characterized by human networks that generate productive output on a sustainable basis, and as business ecosystems consisting of interdependent firms that form symbiotic relationships to create and deliver complementary products and services. Platforms’ conceptual and technological constructs are designed to structure the relationships, and provide a context for connections and value co-creation. With standardised APIs, platforms enable entrepreneurial developers, without bureaucratic constraints, to create timely new products and services, via ‘generative’ or ‘combinatory’ complementary innovation processes, to meet latent and emergent market demands. Thus in practice, with appropriate governance, digital platforms amplify the volume of opportunity in scaling toward success, allowing for multi-sided markets to emerge. Conceptually, the mind-sets, organizational constructs and the technological systems of multi-sided markets, platforms and ecosystems require a reframed perspective on strategic business informatics and management that goes beyond extant literature on strategic and industrial innovation.

This workshop aims to explore how firms create or transform business into new, multi-sided platform ecosystem, and explore the role of business informatics in developing adaptive and dynamic platform capabilities that are able to continually evolve to co-create a virtuous cycle of sustained value for participating actors.

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