

# Introduction to the special issue on platforms

Luis Cabral<sup>1</sup>  | Martin Peitz<sup>2</sup>  | Julian Wright<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of Economics, Stern School of Business/Kaufman Management Center, New York University, New York, New York

<sup>2</sup>Department of Economics, University of Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany

<sup>3</sup>Department of Economics, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore

## Correspondence

Luis Cabral, Stern School of Business/Kaufman Management Center, New York University, 44 West 4th St., Suite 7-140, New York, NY 10012-1126.  
Email: lcabral@stern.nyu.edu

Platform businesses have gained great prominence. Some of the most valuable corporations of the 21st century are built around multisided platform businesses, as are some of the most disruptive new competitors. Fittingly, the body of economics research on multisided platforms has increased considerably. However, the research framework is far from settled: In part, because different industries have different features and research that accommodates these differences is still a work in progress.

The goal of the present issue is to provide perspectives on economics research on multisided platforms (also called two-sided markets). Unlike other special issues, the editors did not solicit long research papers but rather shorter articles that summarize a research program, or provide a progress report, or simply suggest an example or application of an ongoing research project. We are pleased that the vast majority of invited authors accepted the invitation to contribute; and that, all together, the final collection of papers provides an excellent sample of the ongoing research on this important topic.

The papers underwent the standard review process, keeping in mind the special nature of the contributions we were looking for. Papers coauthored by one of the coeditors of this special issue were handled by a different coeditor.

Although we did not have a clear structure in mind, the papers fall naturally into a series of groups, which in turn justify the order in which they are listed.

A first group deals with platform market structure. This group includes the papers “Managing competition on a two-sided platform” (Paul Belleflamme and Martin Peitz); “Friends or foes? Examining platform owners’ entry into complementors’ spaces” (Feng Zhu); and “Platform competition: Betfair and the UK market for sports betting” (Ramon Casadesus-Masanell and Neil Campbell).

The second group of papers focuses on the issue of beliefs and equilibrium selection in platforms. It includes the papers “Incumbency advantage and its value” (Gary Biglaiser, Emilio Calvano, and Jacques Crémer); “Focality advantage in platform competition” (Hanna Halaburda and Yaron Yehezkel); and “Towards a theory of platform dynamics” (Luís Cabral).

Next comes a set of papers dealing with platforms and the sharing economy. This group includes “Platform market competition with endogenous side decisions” (Jay Pil Choi and Yusuke Zenryo); “A theory of multihoming in rideshare competition” (Kevin A. Bryan and Joshua S. Gans); and “The status of workers and platforms in the sharing economy” (Andrei Hagiu and Julian Wright).

The special issue then turns to mergers and antitrust issues. This group of papers includes “Horizontal mergers between multisided platforms: Insights from Cournot competition” (Joao Correia-da-Silva, Bruno Jullien, Yassine Lefouili, and Joana Pinho); “Consumer multi-homing (joint purchases) and market performance: Mergers and entry in media markets” (Simon P. Anderson, Øystein Foros, and Hans Jarle Kind); and “Platform economics and antitrust enforcement: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing” (Michael L. Katz).

Finally, we conclude with a pair of papers dealing with general conceptual issues. This section includes “The reflection problem in network effect estimation” (Marc Rysman); and “The economics of markets and platforms” (Daniel F. Spulber).

It is our hope that this special issue will contribute to the continuing effort on this very important research topic.

**How to cite this article:** Cabral L, Peitz M, Wright J. Introduction to the special issue on platforms. *J Econ Manage Strat.* 2019;28:3–4. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jems.12302>