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Title: Facilitating the search for partners on matching platforms: Restricting agent actions

Abstract:

Two-sided matching platforms, such as those for labor, accommodation, dating, and taxi hailing, control many aspects of the search for partners. We consider a dynamic model of search by strategic agents with costly discovery of pair-specific match value, and find that in many settings, the platform can mitigate wasteful competition in partner search via restricting what agents can see/do. For medium-sized screening costs, the platform should allow one side of the market to choose unilaterally (similar to Instant Book on Airbnb), whereas for large screening costs, the platform should centrally determine matches (similar to taxi hailing marketplaces). Surprisingly, restrictions can improve social welfare even when screening costs are small. In asymmetric markets where agents on one side tend to be more selective, the platform should force the more selective side of the market to reach out first, by explicitly disallowing the less selective side from doing so. This allows the agents on the less selective side to exercise more choice in equilibrium.

Joint work with Daniela Saban. **The paper is available [here](#).**

About the Speaker:

Yash Kanoria is an Assistant Professor in Decision, Risk and Operations at Columbia Business School, working primarily on matching markets and the design and operations of marketplaces. Previously, he obtained a BTech from IIT Bombay in 2007, a PhD in Electrical Engineering from Stanford in 2012, and spent a year at Microsoft Research New England during 2012-13 as a Schramm postdoctoral fellow. He received an NSF CAREER Award in 2017, a Simons-Berkeley Research Fellowship in 2015 and an INFORMS JFIG paper competition second prize in 2014.