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EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley	Ph.D. in Economics	2011
Cornell University	B.A. <i>cum laude</i> and Distinction in All Subjects	2005

POSITION

The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Instructor, Department of Economics	2011–present
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FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

- 2010 CUHK Direct Grant (\$24154 HKD)
- 2009 UC Berkeley Population Center Research Grant (\$16,000 USD)
- 2009 UC Berkeley Institute for Business Research Mini Grant (\$1000 USD)
- 2009 Russell Sage Foundation Small Grant (\$4600 USD)
- 2008 Dean Normative Time Fellowship

WORKING PAPERS

“Demand for a Commitment Device in Online Gaming”

The amount of time youth spend on game-playing is significant, with a recent representative survey pinning the number at 0.84 hours per day. To investigate the extent to which game-playing can be attributed to self-control problems, I implemented a field experiment on a type of widely played multiplayer online games. I monitored the amount of time 105 undergraduates spent playing online games for a period of 3.5 months. Students assigned to the treatment group were additionally given software that they could use to limit their duration of play.

I found that the demand for commitment appears limited—while 79 percent of the treatment subjects used the software voluntarily in the first four weeks, the fraction eventually dropped to around 5 percent. At the end of the experiment, 10.4 percent of treatment subjects had a positive willingness-to-pay for the software. There is suggestive evidence that usage of the commitment device reduces duration of play but not frequency of play—subjects in the treatment group played an estimated 66.4 percent less than those in the control group, as measured by total hours played. The difference is driven by a reduction among heavy players, and persists even after most subjects stopped using the devices. Lastly, I find that players on average overestimated how long they would play.

“Demand for Commitment: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment” with Dan Acland

We examine the utilization of commitment devices on an online word game that has few substitutes. The experimental environment allows us to accurately measure time spent on the game based on the activities of over 55,000 players. We find that 12-35 percent of subjects provided with a commitment device manifested a demand for it, depending on what threshold one uses to categorize a subject as having a demand. The availability of commitment device reduces the number of long sessions while increasing that of short sessions. Lastly, players with commitment devices stay longer with the game.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Are the Choices of Children and Seniors Consistent under Uncertainty?” with Mike Urbancic

We investigate the relationship between school children and seniors' consistency of choices under risk and their age and socio-demographic background. Consistency of choices, as measured by adherence to the Generalized Axiom of Revealed Preference (GARP), is a fundamental property of rationality in economic theory. The degree to which consistency varies with age thus has important implications for theories of mental development and the study of aging. This study measures adherence to GARP by asking subjects to make a series of trade-offs between different amounts of possible compensation, corresponding to different random outcomes.

“Mental Accounting among Seniors”

I study how seniors account for their daily expenses by comparing their self-reported expenditure with records of their electronic transactions.

“Uncertainty in Hong Kong’s University Admission” with Yinghua He

This project investigates the effect of uncertainty on students’ application behavior. Taking the change in the public examination system as a natural experiment, we examine how the two graduating high school cohorts in academic year 2011-2012 approach their JUPAS applications. The lack of past admission statistics implies that the new cohort face higher uncertainty, and as a result they might become more conservative in choosing which programs to apply. We would also like to see if providing parents and students with more information changes the application strategy of the new cohort.

“Accuracy of Prediction: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment” with Dan Acland

Using a popular online word game, we examine the utilization of commitment devices and accuracy of players' predictions about how much they would play in the future. This is important because the literature often assumes that incentivizing is necessary and sufficient to garner accurate responses, but there has little empirical study of whether this is the case. We use an online word game that has few substitutes.

TEACHING

Course Instructor, Department of Economics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (2011–2012)

Economics of Behavioral Finance, Basic Microeconomics, Perspectives in Economics

Course Instructor, Department of Economics, U.C. Berkeley (Summer 2009, Summer 2010)

Financial and Behavioral Economics

Graduate Student Instructor, Department of Economics, U.C. Berkeley (Fall 2005–Fall 2010)

Financial and Behavioral Economics, Intermediate Microeconomics, GSI Practicum

Teaching Assistant, School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University (Summer 2008)

International Finance

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee: Journal of the European Economic Association

OTHER INFORMATION

Languages: English, Cantonese and Mandarin

Citizenship: Hong Kong, China