Engineering Tripos Part IIB, 4E3: Business Innovation in a Digital Age, 2020-21

Module Leader

Karla Sayegh [1]

Timing and Structure

Michaelmas term. Assessment: Coursework / 1 Individual Paper 100%

Aims

The aims of the course are to:

- Understand how digitally-enabled innovation emerges inside organizations and across ecosystems.
- Analyse and assess the effects of digitally-enabled innovation on strategizing, work and organizing and the management of expertise.

Objectives

As specific objectives, by the end of the course students should be able to:

- explain different dimensions of business innovation
- evaluate innovation processes and practices inside organizations
- analyse how digital technologies may enable or constrain organizational innovation
- explain how digital platforms have changed strategy-making and firm economics
- analyse how organizations create and/or navigate ecosystems to innovate
- analyse how digital technologies bring about new work practices
- understand the planned and unintended consequences of digital technologies in organizations
- explain the barriers of knowledge collaboration
- explain the mechanisms of knowledge collaboration needed to innovate
- assess the cultural drivers and barriers to digital innovation
- evaluate how digital technologies afford new ways of organising and change the nature of work
- think critically about the organisational and societal changes triggered by the emergence of new technologies

Content

Why do some organizations outperform others and come to dominate the marketplace? Innovation is at the core of the answer. Now more than ever, emerging digital technologies, such as web-enabled platforms and sophisticated learning algorithms that exploit massive digital trace data, are driving and scaling innovation in unprecedented ways. Digitally-enabled innovation has not only transformed products and services but has also upended business models, strategic thinking, ways of working, forms of collaborating and the ability to access ideas and expertise beyond organizational boundaries. The emerging field of digital innovation takes an integrative, cross-disciplinary perspective to support general managers (rather than functional managers in areas such as R&D, production, HR, marketing and IT and so forth) in nurturing new ideas and successfully implementing them or bringing them to market.

The aim of this course is twofold: First, students will understand how digitally-enabled innovation emerges inside organizations and across ecosystems. Second, students will analyse and assess the effects of digitally-enabled
innovations on strategizing, work and organizing and the management of expertise.

MODULE OUTLINE

Session 1: Tuesday 13 October, 16:00-18:00

- Introduction to innovation in a digital age
- Structure: interactive lecture and class discussion

Session 2: Tuesday 20 October, 16:00-18:00

- Digital innovation: Platforms and ecosystems
- Structure: interactive lecture, group work and class discussion

Session 3: Tuesday 27 October, 16:00-18:00

- Business model innovation
- Structure: interactive lecture, group work and class discussion

Session 4: Tuesday 3 November, 16:00-18:00

- Data and algorithms
- Structure: interactive lecture, group work and class discussion

Session 5: Tuesday 10 November, 16:00-18:00

- Knowledge and innovation
- Structure: interactive lecture, group work and class discussion

Session 6: Tuesday 17 November, 16:00-18:00

- Open innovation
- Structure: interactive lecture, group work and class discussion

Session 7: Tuesday 27 November, 16:00-18:00

- Digital innovation and the changing nature of work and organising
- Structure: interactive lecture, group work and class discussion

Session 8: Tuesday 1 December, 16:00-18:00

- Student presentations
- Structure: individual presentations and class discussion

Session 1: Introduction to Innovation in a Digital Age

Session 1: Introduction to innovation in a digital age
Learning points of the session:

- Introduction to the course, what to expect and how we will work
- The transformative impact of digital technologies
- Understanding what innovation means

Mandatory reading material and preparation before the session

**Required reading**

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Session 2: Digital Innovation: Platforms and Ecosystems

**Session 2: Digital innovation: Platforms and ecosystems**

Learning points of the session:

- Platform economics
- Platform strategies
- Innovating in ecosystems

Mandatory reading material and preparation before the session

**Required reading**

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Case Study

Session 3: Business Model Innovation

Learning points of the session:

- Creating new business models
- Shifting to new business models
- Emergence of new practices and impact for the industry

Mandatory reading material and preparation before the session

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Case Study

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Session 4: Data and Algorithms

Learning points of the session:

- Big data and business intelligence for competitive advantage
- Ethical issues of algorithmic and data-driven ways of working
- AI and organizations: decision making, power and control

Mandatory reading material and preparation before the session
Session 5: Knowledge and Innovation

Learning points of the session:

- The role of knowledge in innovation
- Producing novelty across knowledge boundaries
- Cross-functional teams and complex collaboration

Mandatory reading material and preparation before the session

### Required reading

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### Case study

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Session 6: Open Innovation
Session 6: Open innovation

Learning points of the session:

- What is open innovation
- Crowdsourcing
- Challenges to open collaboration

Mandatory reading material and preparation before the session

Background reading

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Case study

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Session 7: Open innovation

Session 7: Digital Innovation and the Changing Nature of Work and Organising

Learning points of the session:

- Technology bringing about new ways of working and organizing
- Collaborating with technology
- Organizational and cultural barriers and enablers to digital innovation

Mandatory reading material and preparation before the session

Required reading

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Session 8: Student Presentations

Learning points of the session:
- Practise presentation skills
- Receive feedback on individual paper
- Practise reviewing skills

Preparation before the session:
Prepare the slides of your presentation (10 min) and practise.
Send your slides to the lecturer and to your reviewer by Monday, November 30 at 500pm.
Read the slides of your classmate and prepare feedback (max 5 min).

During the session:
You will present the main ideas of your paper to the class.
You will receive feedback from the lecturer and a classmate.
You will provide feedback to each other on how each paper can be further developed.

Further notes
REQUIRED READING
All students are required to read a number of papers (3-4) before each session. There are three types of readings:

- Academic journal articles. Articles in peer-reviewed academic journals focused on producing novel theoretical contributions to the field of organisational studies and information systems.
- Practitioner articles. Based on research, these articles focus on the implications of theory to the practice of management. They often provide actionable guidance regarding salient organisational issues or problems.
Case studies are analytical narratives of real-world business problems/challenges/dilemmas facing a protagonist in an organization. They are designed to generate discussions that offer valuable learnings and concepts through collective analysis, data-driven argumentation and creative exchanges. Cases provide the context for problem framing, external/internal analysis and well-argued solutions. They provide a 'real-world' opportunity to apply concepts and frameworks in order to arrive at well-reasoned recommendations.

Coursework

The 4E3 module will be assessed by the following means:

- **Written paper, individual** (100% of total mark). This component of the assessment is made up of a final term paper.

### Coursework

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<td>Individual</td>
<td>Tuesday, 8 December 16:00 (via moodle)</td>
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<td>Report</td>
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**Final term paper**

The individual paper assignment will include a 2,500-3,000 word paper on an agreed topic. Students will investigate and report on the effects of digital innovation in transforming a particular industry (e.g. digital goods in the entertainment sector, mobile applications in banking, etc.). Students are expected to apply the concepts discussed in the lectures. It is expected that students will, where appropriate, explicitly draw on the articles provided in the course as well as other relevant articles from their own research. The written work you submit for assessment needs to be grounded in the appropriate scholarly literature. Please, make sure that your work is carefully referenced in accordance with the Harvard system. ([http://www.blogs.jbs.cam.ac.uk/infolib/2013/10/04/advice-on-plagiarism-a...](http://www.blogs.jbs.cam.ac.uk/infolib/2013/10/04/advice-on-plagiarism-a...)[11]) More information is provided in a separate document and will be presented in the first session.

**Learning objective:**

- Deepen understandings of the concepts, frameworks and tools covered in the class.
- Apply approaches and lessons learned from the class to a specific phenomenon.
- Improve analytical and writing skills.

**Examination Guidelines**

Please refer to [Form & conduct of the examinations](http://www.blogs.jbs.cam.ac.uk/infolib/2013/10/04/advice-on-plagiarism-a...)[12].
UK-SPEC

The UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence (UK-SPEC) [13] describes the requirements that have to be met in order to become a Chartered Engineer, and gives examples of ways of doing this.

UK-SPEC is published by the Engineering Council on behalf of the UK engineering profession. The standard has been developed, and is regularly updated, by panels representing professional engineering institutions, employers and engineering educators. Of particular relevance here is the ‘Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes’ (AHEP) document [14] which sets out the standard for degree accreditation.

The Output Standards Matrices [15] indicate where each of the Output Criteria as specified in the AHEP 3rd edition document is addressed within the Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering Triposes.