## Research project and supervisor team

Supervisory	Dr. Jenny Pu
Team	Prof. David Phang
Short introduction &	Leveling the playing field: Exploring strategies of digital platform owners to
description of	affect complementor performance
research project	
	Digital platforms such as social media, live streaming, and online marketplaces
	often exhibit an uneven distribution of value and resources, with a small number
	of complementors generating a disproportionate share of content, views, likes,
	followers, and revenue (Brynjolfsson et al., 2011). While top complementors may
	be major sources of revenue for a platform, it is important for platform owners
	to also nurture and support smaller complementors to ensure a diverse and
	dynamic ecosystem By providing resources and support to a variety of
	complementars platform owners can create a balance that allows for both top
	performers and smaller players to thrive Additionally supporting smaller
	complementars can facter innovation and new ideas, which is the key to the long-
	term survival and the prosperity of the platform ecosystem. Despite importance
	of complements to platform success, prior platform research generally assumes
	that the distribution of complementars is everypeously determined rather than a
	construct that could be strategically menaged (Malature and Subaragical
	construct that could be strategically managed (Michtyre and Subramaniam,
	2009). Specifically, previous studies have not investigated now platform owners
	may strategize to develop a balanced set of complementors on their platforms.
	This PhD project aims to fill in this research gap by developing an understanding
	of how the strategies of platform owners may impact complementor
	performance and the thrive of the platform ecosystem.
	Two starkly different theories exist about the strategic directions of platform
	owners to shift the distribution of complementors. On one hand, platform
	owners may exploit technologies such as search engines or recommendation
	systems to reinforce the dominance of top complementors, which enhances the
	"superstar effect" or "winner-take-all" dynamic (Rosen, 1981; Frank and Cook,
	1995). On the other hand, it is possible for a platform owner to reduce search
	and distribution costs to increase the demand and supply of products and
	services offered by niche complementors, leading to a "long tail" distribution of
	complementors (Anderson, 2004). This PhD project aims to examine these two
	tenets in the context of live streaming platforms. Similar to other content
	development platforms such as Youtube (Tang et al., 2012), the viewers and
	popularity are unevenly distributed on live streaming platforms where a few
	popular streamers attract the majority of audience (Brynjolfsson et al., 2011).
	The platform owner may choose to implement strategies to shift the distribution

	of streamers towards the head or the tail. For example, it could display the links
	to the top streamers on the front page to enhance the superstar phenomenon;
	or it may recommend less popular streamers to enlarge the size of the long tail.
	It yet remains an unanswered question which strategies will be implemented by
	the platform owners and how different strategies may affect streamer
	performance and the distribution of streamers.
	The objectives of this PhD project are three-fold. First, it aims to explore the
	strategies that a platform owner can adopt to affect complementor performance
	and distribution. Second, it will investigate how the strategies of platform owners
	will affect complementor performance in the short-term. Third, this study will
	develop an understanding on the long-term impact of platform strategies on
	complementor distribution. A mixed method approach will be employed by
	combining interview and secondary objective data from a large live streaming
	platform to achieve the proposed research goals.
Contact points	Students who are interested in this project may first contact Dr. Jenny Pu
	<pre><jenny.pu@nottingham.edu.cn> for more details.</jenny.pu@nottingham.edu.cn></pre>