

Kai Zhu

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Assistant Professor · Bocconi University · Milan, Italy

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Academic Positions

2022 – Present Assistant Professor, **Bocconi University**

2021 – 2022 Assistant Professor, **McGill University**

Education

2021 Ph.D. in Information Systems, **Boston University**

2015 M.A. in Economics, **Indiana University**

2013 B.A. in Economics, **Peking University**

2011 B.S. in Computer Science, **Beijing Language and Culture University**

Research Interests

Digital Platforms · Economics of Digitization · Artificial Intelligence · Computational Social Science

Research

Publications

The AI Democratization Paradox: Evidence from Decentralized Knowledge Communities
Management Science (2026)

with Dylan Walker (Chapman U)

[Paper](#) · [Slides](#) · [Interactive App](#) · [AI Overview](#)

Monetizing Platforms: An Empirical Analysis of Supply and Demand Responses to Entry Costs in Two-sided Markets

Management Science (2025)

with Qiaoni Shi (Bocconi) and Shrabastee Banerjee (Tilburg)

[Paper](#) · [Slides](#) · [AI Poster](#) · [AI Overview](#)

Negative Peer Feedback and User Content Generation: Evidence from a Restaurant Review Platform

Production and Operations Management (2024)

with Warut Khern-Am-Nual (McGill U) and Yinan Yu (U of Oklahoma)

If a Tree Falls in the Forest: Presidential Press Conferences and Early Media Narratives about the COVID-19 Crisis

Journal of Quantitative Description (2022)

with Masha Krupenkin (Boston College), Dylan Walker (Chapman U), David Rothschild (Microsoft)

Content Growth and Attention Contagion in Information Networks: Addressing Information Poverty on Wikipedia

Information Systems Research (2020)

with Dylan Walker (Chapman U) and Lev Muchnik (Hebrew U)

Working Papers

Adverse Selection in the AI Data Commons

Under Review

[Paper](#) · [Slides](#) · [Interactive App](#) · [AI Overview](#)

Monetizing through Subscriptions: Evidence from Creators in the Long Tail

Revise and Resubmit at *Marketing Science*

with Xin Zhou (Bocconi)

[Paper](#) · [Slides](#) · [AI Poster](#) · [AI Overview](#)

Quantifying Consumer-Product Fit: A Representation Learning Approach

Revise and Resubmit at *Journal of Marketing Research*

with Qiaoni Shi (Bocconi) and Christian Hotz-Behofsits (WU Vienna)

[Paper](#) · [Slides](#) · [AI Poster](#) · [AI Overview](#)

Work in Progress (Selected)

AI Search and Web Traffic

with Qiaoni Shi (Bocconi)

Welfare Effects of AI-powered Digital Content

with Joel Waldfogel (U of Minnesota) and Luis Aguiar (U of Zurich)

Social Network, Political Identity, and Demand for Firearms

with Jessica Kim (Bocconi)

Awards & Grants

Award

Wikimedia Foundation Research Award of the Year, 2021

Grants

Italy Ministry of University and Research Fund (PRIN), 2023–2026

Role: Principal Investigator

€ 227,708

Canada SSHRC Insight Grant, 2022–2023

Role: Principal Investigator

CAD \$79,749

Wikimedia Research & Technology Fund, 2022–2023

Role: Principal Investigator

USD \$45,840

Teaching

AI Tools for Business Analysis

Agentic AI for Data-driven Insights

Academic Service

Program Committee

- Workshop on Platform Analytics, 2024/2025/2026
- Workshop on Information Technology and Systems, 2023/2024/2025
- Wiki Workshop, 2023/2024/2025/2026
- Conference for Information Systems and Technology, 2021

Associate Editor

- International Conference on Information Systems, 2023/2024/2025
- Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems, 2024

Ad Hoc Reviewer

- Management Science
- MIS Quarterly
- Information Systems Research
- Production and Operations Management
- Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
- Nature Communications

Presentations & Invited Talks

Adverse Selection in the AI Data Commons

Digital Economy Workshop 2026

The AI Democratization Paradox: Evidence from Decentralized Knowledge Platforms

Wiki Workshop 2022 · McGill University 2022 · Statistical Challenges in E-commerce Research 2022 · Wikimedia Foundation 2022 · WITS 2022 · Statistical Challenges in E-commerce Research 2023 · Wikimania 2023 · WISE 2023 · Digital Economy Workshop 2024 · Munich Summer Institute 2024 · Bocconi Marketing Research Camp 2024 · Mapping and Governing the Online World 2024 · Wikimedia Research Showcase 2024 · WU Vienna 2024 · HEC Lausanne 2024 · UK Digital Economics Workshop 2025 · Conference on AI and ML 2025 · WISE 2025 · National University of Singapore 2026

Monetizing Platforms: An Empirical Analysis of Supply and Demand Responses to Entry Costs in Two-sided Markets

CODE 2021* · Bocconi University 2022 · Singapore Management University 2022* · Indian Institute of Management 2022* · EMAC 2022* · Customer Journey in a Digital World 2022* · Statistical Challenges in E-commerce Research 2022 · WISE 2022* · HICSS 2023 · London Business School 2023* · University College London 2023* · Imperial College London 2023* · Workshop on Platform Analytics 2024* · Creator Economy Retreat 2025*

Content Growth and Attention Contagion in Information Networks: Addressing Information Poverty on Wikipedia

WWW 2017 · CODE 2017 · WISE 2017 · Statistical Challenges in E-commerce Research 2018 · Harvard Business School 2018 · WEBEIS 2019 · Wiki Workshop 2020 · Microsoft Research NYC 2020 · McGill University 2020 · Wikimedia Research Showcase 2021

Negative Peer Feedback and User Content Generation: Evidence from a Restaurant Review Platform

AMCIS 2021 · Statistical Challenges in E-commerce Research 2021 · CIST 2021*

If a Tree Falls in the Forest: COVID-19, Media Choices, and Presidential Agenda Setting

ICWSM 2020* · PaCSS 2020* · BU Institute for Health System Innovation & Policy 2020

How Media Ownership Impacts Information Skews: A Study of Televised News Using Massive-Scale Text Transcripts

PaCSS 2018 · Statistical Challenges in E-commerce Research 2019 · WISE 2019 · Boston University 2020 · Microsoft Research NYC 2020

* presented by a coauthor