

ALEX WOOD-DOUGHTY

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Undergraduate Studies:

B.A. Economics and Political Economy, Washington University in St. Louis, *magna cum laude*, 2012

Graduate Studies:

University of California, Santa Barbara, 2012 to present

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

Expected Completion Date: June 2017

References:

Professor Peter Kuhn

Department of Economics

University of California, Santa Barbara

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Professor Douglas Steigerwald

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Professor Richard Startz

Department of Economics

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Teaching and Research Fields:

Primary fields: Labor Economics and Econometrics

Teaching Experience:

2016-2017 Teaching Assistant for Econ 241, Ph.D. Econometrics

2014-2016 Teaching Assistant for Econ 140A, Introduction to Econometrics

2013-2014 Teaching Assistant for Econ 1, Introduction to Economics

Research Experience and Other Employment:

2015-2016 Research Assistant for Richard Startz

2014-2015 Research Assistant for Ted Bergstrom and Douglas Steigerwald

Presentations:

2016-2017 WUSTL Economics Graduate Student Conference, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, California Econometrics Conference, Berkeley Labor Lunch, All California Labor Economics Conference (Poster)

2015-2016 WEAI Annual Conference, Trans-Pacific Labor Seminar, ZEW Workshop on Atypical Employment

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

2016 NET Institute Summer Grant
2012-2017 University of California Regents Fellowship

Research Papers:

“Do Employers Learn from Public, Subjective, Performance Reviews?” (Job Market Paper)

Much of the new “gig economy” relies on reputation systems to reduce problems of asymmetric information. In most cases, these reputation systems function well by soliciting unbiased feedback from buyers and sellers. However, certain features of online labor markets create incentives for employers to misreport worker performance. This paper tests whether employers learn about worker productivity from public, subjective, performance reviews using data from a large online labor market. Starting with a simple model of employer learning in the presence of potentially biased reviews, I derive testable hypotheses about the relationship between public information and wages, worker attrition, and contract renewals. I find that these public reviews provide substantial information to the market and that other firms use them to learn about the productivity of workers. I also find evidence that these reviews affect how long workers stay in the labor market. Finally, using data on applications, I provide evidence of a mechanism for honest reviews. I show that workers punish firms that leave negative reviews by refusing to work for them again. Together, this body of evidence suggests that reputation systems in online labor markets provide significant information to both workers and firms and help reduce problems of asymmetric information.

“Improved Estimation of Peer Effects using Network Data” (with Richard Startz)

The ability to estimate peer effects in network models has been advanced considerably by the IV model of Bramoullé et al. (2009). While such IV estimates work well for very sparse networks, they exhibit very weak power for networks of even modest densities. We review and extend the findings of Bramoullé et al. (2009) and then propose an alternative estimator. We show that our new estimator works approximately as well as IV in very sparse networks and performs much better in networks of moderate density.