

<b>School/Department:</b>	Rotterdam School of Management Department of Strategic Management & Entrepreneurship
<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>Strategizing in the Digital Economy: Scaling Beyond Borders and Understanding how Complementors Strategize</b>
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>The term “digital economy” refers to an economy that is based on digital computing technologies. Although the digital transformation of society has only just begun, it is already clear that the digital transformation challenges our traditional understanding regarding how businesses should be structured to most effectively create and deliver value; how firms interact with each other and with their customers; and how customers access services, information, and goods (Yoo, Boland, Lyytinen, &amp; Majchrzak, 2012). For example, we can already observe that services and interactions are increasingly digitalized and modularized, and as digitalization increasingly permeates even physical products, enabling the connectivity of these to digital platforms, new business models are enabled that have the potential to scale globally – and to disrupt established incumbents (Rietveld, 2017).</p> <p>To date, the focus of digital transformation is on the use of digital technologies such as social media, mobility, analytics, and more. Indeed, many firms focus on front-end processes and channels with smart applications (“apps”) to make use of technological advancements in cloud computing, big data, or mobility. It is therefore not surprising that the number of mobile app users already surpassed desktop users in 2014. The global mobile app revenue was USD 88.3 billion in 2016. In 2020, mobile apps are projected to generate USD 188.9 billion in revenue (Statista, 2017). The disruptive potential of the use of digital technologies is widely recognized within and outside academia; yet, although the wave of digitally enabled business models started already in the mid-2000s, strategy scholars have been slow to address this phenomenon.</p> <p>There are two areas that offer particularly salient opportunities for research. First, while global strategy theory suggests that firms have to overcome entry barriers when expanding to foreign markets, digital products can often be sold at no or very limited additional marginal costs in foreign markets; in the case of mobile apps, digital products</p>

	<p>(mobile apps) become instantly available in foreign markets through the iOS App Store or Google Play.</p> <p>Uber and Google's failure in China, however, illustrate the unique challenges firms in the digital economy face when expanding across borders. For example, entrepreneurial firms in the digital economy are often embedded in so-called business ecosystems (Kapoor &amp; Agarwal, 2017), shifting the focus from competition to cooperation during the internationalization process. Similarly, firms in the digital economy also have to interact with the regulatory environment in host countries. This raises important theoretical questions (e.g., Shaheer &amp; Li, 2018). Most notably, we continue to lack a clear understanding as to how digital firms can successfully scale their business beyond borders when expanding abroad despite all the unique challenges with which these firms are confronted in the digital economy.</p> <p>Second, while the academic literature has started to advance our understanding of how digital platforms strategize (Reuver, Sorensen, &amp; Basloe, 2018), relatively little is known about how complementors that join such digital platforms should strategize. This omission is surprising given that many of these complementors face a dilemma: On the one hand, these digital platforms give them access to a broad potential user base. On the other hand, platform owners demand a sizeable commission from complementors in return for facilitating these transactions. This is particularly problematic not only in light of the bargaining power these platforms possess vis-à-vis its complementors (Business Insider, 2020), but also because some of these platform owners have started to vertically integrate and directly compete with complementary firms (Zhu &amp; Liu, 2019). For example, Apple has recently announced the launch of a fitness app, meaning that it will directly compete with complementors that have offered their fitness apps through Apple's app store. Hence, there is a clear need on better understanding how complementors strategize.</p> <p><u>References:</u>        Business Insider. 2020. Apple and Epic Games are mired in a bitter legal battle, and 'Fortnite' is in the middle of it. Here's how Apple found itself in Epic's crosshairs. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.businessinsider.nl/fortnite-epic-games-apple-lawsuit-explained-2020-8?international=true&amp;r=US">https://www.businessinsider.nl/fortnite-epic-games-apple-lawsuit-explained-2020-8?international=true&amp;r=US</a>.        Kapoor, R., &amp; Agarwal, S. 2017. Sustaining superior performance in business ecosystems: Evidence from application software</p>
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<b>Requirements of candidate:</b>	<p>Background: <i>Economics, Management, Strategy, International Business</i></p> <p>Master's degree: Yes</p> <p>EUR requirement: IELTS: 7.5 (min. 6.0 for all subs) or TOEFL: 100 (internet) or 600 (paper); GMAT-test or GRE-test: 85%</p>
<b>Supervisor information:</b>	<p><i>Promoter: Prof. dr. Justin Jansen</i>  <i>Email address: <a href="mailto:jjansen@rsm.nl">jjansen@rsm.nl</a></i>  <i>Personal website: <a href="https://www.rsm.nl/people/justin-jansen/">https://www.rsm.nl/people/justin-jansen/</a></i>  <i>Recent publication list, preferably last 3-5 years (1-2 pages):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R.R. Blagoeva, K. Kavusan, &amp; J.J.P. Jansen (2020). Who Violates Expectations When? How Firms' Growth and Dividend Reputations affect Investors' Reactions to Acquisitions. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i>, 41(9): 1712-1742. doi.org/10.1002/smj.3155.</li> <li>• A.S. Alexiev, J.J.P. Jansen, H.W. Volberda &amp; Frans, A.J. Van Den Bosch (2020). Contextualizing Senior Executive Advice Seeking: The Role of Decision Process Comprehensiveness and Empowerment Climate. <i>Organization Studies</i>, 41(4): 471-497. doi.org/10.1177/0170840619830128.</li> </ul>

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