

Academy of International Business—Canada Chapter

2019 Conference Theme: ICT Investments and MNCs

Date: Friday, May 3, 2019 (9:00 am – 4:00 pm)

Location: Rotman School of Management
Institute for International Business
University of Toronto

Keynote Speaker: Professor John Cantwell

The proliferation in the deployment of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) across business processes is a key force in the process of economic globalization and is having a significant impact on the way MNCs conduct business across international borders. ICT has reduced the costs associated with coordinating activities across international borders, thus having a significant impact on MNC strategies. According to Alcácer, Cantwell, and Piscitello (2016), in their opening paper of a *JIBS* Special Issue¹: *Internationalization in the Information Age*, we are now in the “flowering of the information age”, where such technologies are increasingly deployed across industries and processes, hence affecting every industry. “At the level of firms or organizations, the ICT revolution has facilitated new trends in organizational decentralization.” Furthermore, the increased deployment of ICT has had an impact on the competitive advantage of locations, MNC strategies, and the overall governance structure of international business activities, and has facilitated new forms of knowledge combination and integration across borders.

Chen and Kamal (2016) use a transactions cost framework to demonstrate through an examination of intra-firm trade how the adoption of these new technologies have affected the boundaries of the firm. Their results are shown to be systematically related to the complexity of the technology involved and the extent to which processes can be codified. As they note, their results are conditional on a firm being an MNC, thus calling for more research that considers both intensive and extensive margins – that is, how ICT deployment can affect the decision of a firm to become an MNC in the first place.

Land O'Lakes CEO *Chris Policinski* received the 2018 AIB Executive of the Year Award. During his acceptance speech, he *spoke of the* increased importance ICT deployment and the analysis of big data in the global agr-food business including

¹ <https://link.springer.com/journal/41267/47/5/page/1>

his company. Similarly, ICT is also impacting other industries, such as textiles, hotels and consulting.

While there have been important papers written in this area, there is much more to be done. As noted by Grant and Yeo (2018), “Questions persist on how ICT ... enable globalization ... and other performance measures.” While their focus is “limited to how financial factors, ICT, and tech investments affect sales performance,” they also provide a long list of ICT performance measures.

This conference seeks to bring together scholars that are undertaking research in this area. The AIB-Canada conference invites papers that focus on theoretical and empirical analyses of the deployment of ICTs on MNCs strategies, as well as the development of ICT policies to strengthen MNEs' competitiveness, broadly defined, in any industry or global context.

Submit full papers to: Walid Hejazi (hejazi@rotman.utoronto.ca) by February 1, 2018. Confirmation of paper acceptance for presentation will be by March 1, 2019. ***No Registration Fee*** Details on travel, accommodation, and other conference information will be posted online: more info soon.

Conference Organizers

Anthony Goerzen @ Queens, Bernard S Blum and Walid Hejazi @ Rotman,
Ari Van Assche @ HEC Montréal

References

Alcácer, J., Cantwell, J. & Piscitello, L. (2016). “Internationalization in the information age: A new era for places, firms, and international business networks?” *Journal of International Business Studies* (47): 499-512.

Chen, W. & Kamal, F. J. (2016). “The impact of information and communication technology adoption on multinational firm boundary decisions.” *Journal of International Business Studies* (47): 563-576.

Grant, Delvin and Benjamin Yeo. (2018), “A global perspective on tech investment, financing, and ICT on manufacturing and service industry performance.” *International Journal of Information Management* (43) 130–145.

Internationalization in the Information Age (2016). *Journal of International Business Studies, Special Issue* (47) 5.