

Emma Wiles (née van Inwegen)

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Academic Position & Affiliations

Isabel Anderson Career Development Professor, Boston University	2025-
Assistant Professor, Boston University <i>Information Systems, Questrom School of Business</i>	2024-
Visiting Scholar, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis	2026-2027
Digital Fellow, Initiative on the Digital Economy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology	2024-
Faculty Fellow, Digital Business Institute, Boston University	2025-

Education

PhD Management Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Dissertation title: <i>Artificial Intelligence in Labor Market Matching</i> Committee members: <i>John Horton, Catherine Tucker, Dean Eckles</i>	2019-2024
MS Management Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology	2019-2022
BA Mathematics, Economics, University of Washington	2011-2015

Teaching Experience

BU IS223 Introduction to Information Systems	Fall 2024, 2025, 2026
MIT 15.818 MBA Level Pricing (TA)	Fall 2023
MIT 15.567 MBA Level Economics of Information: Strategy, Structure and Pricing (TA)	Spring 2023
MIT 15.575 PhD Level Economics of Information and Information Technology (TA)	Spring 2022

Professional Service

Platform Strategy Research Symposium, Scientific Committee	2026
Conference on Digital Experimentation, Technical Committee	2020, 2021, 2024, 2025 Questrom
Junior Faculty Brown Bag, Organizer	2026

Served as referee for:

Management Science, Information Systems Research, International Conference on Information Systems, MISQ, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Public Economics, Economics of Education Review, Journal of Human Resources, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, American Economic Review: Insights

Fellowships, Honors, and Awards

Isabel Anderson Career Development Professorship (\$90,000)	2025-2028
Economics of AI Stripe Fellowship (\$10,000)	2025
PhD Thesis Award in Artificial Intelligence in Entrepreneurship and Management (AIEM) <i>University of Padova</i> (€5,000)	2024
Microsoft Research Grant for <i>AI and the Future of Work</i> (\$50,000)	2023
Zenon S. Zannetos Memorial Fellowship (MIT)	2020-2023
MIT Graduate Student Fellowship	2019-2020

Publications

[Algorithmic Writing Assistance on Jobseekers' Resumes Increases Hires](#) (with Zanele Munyikwa and John Horton), 2025

Published in Management Science

- Media coverage: MarketWatch, Business Insider, Yahoo News

There is a strong association between the quality of the writing in a resume for new labor market entrants and whether those entrants are ultimately hired. We show that this relationship is, at least partially, causal: a field experiment in an online labor market was conducted with nearly half a million jobseekers in which a treated group received algorithmic writing assistance. Treated jobseekers experienced an 8% increase in the probability of getting hired. Contrary to concerns that the assistance is taking away a valuable signal, we find no evidence that employers were less satisfied. We present a model in which better writing is not a signal of ability but helps employers ascertain ability, which rationalizes our findings.

[Why You Shouldn't Call AI Agents Employees](#) (with Megan Hsu, Lisa Krayer, Julie Bedard, and Matt Kropp), 2026

Published in Harvard Business Review

As organizations experiment with placing AI agents on org charts as “employees,” new research shows this framing has unintended consequences. In a large-scale experiment, anthropomorphizing AI reduced individual accountability, increased unnecessary escalation, lowered review quality, and heightened employee uncertainty about their roles—without improving adoption. The findings suggest the core challenge is not whether to deploy agentic AI, but how to redesign workflows, roles, and governance so humans remain clearly accountable while effectively supervising increasingly capable systems.

[Generative AI and the Temporary Upskilling of Knowledge Workers](#) (with Lisa Krayer, Mohamed Abadi, Urvi Awasthi, Ryan Kennedy, Pamela Mishkin, Francois Candelon, Daniel Sack), 2026.

Published in Nature Human Behaviour

“Upskilling” often refers to the process by which workers acquire and expand their skills, enabling them to perform different types of work as market demands change. This paper demonstrates that while generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) can act as an “exoskeleton,” enhancing workers’ capabilities while they attempt new skills, these gains are dependent on the continued use of the technology. When the “exoskeleton” is removed, little to no knowledge is retained independently, revealing that the newfound capabilities are temporary and reliant on the external support provided by GenAI. We run a randomized controlled trial on “upskilling” with GenAI by providing Boston Consulting Group (BCG) consultants with access and training in using ChatGPT to solve technical problems. We measure their performance on real data science tasks outside their skill sets, which cannot be independently solved by ChatGPT. Treated workers score 49, 20, and 18 percentage points higher than those in the control group on the three tasks and perform close to the level of real BCG data scientists on two of the three tasks. However, treated workers are no better at answering technical questions without the use of ChatGPT post-experiment, suggesting their demonstrated newfound technical capabilities do not imply knowledge acquisition.

[Minimum Wage Increases and Low-Wage Employment: Evidence from Seattle](#) (with Ekaterina Jardim, Mark Long, Robert Plotnick, Jacob Vigdor, Hilary Wething) 2022.

Published in American Economic Journal: Economic Policy

- Media coverage: The Economist, FiveThirtyEight, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, New York Times (The Upshot), Seattle Times, Washington Post

[Boundary Discontinuity Methods in the Presence of Policy Spillovers](#) (with Ekaterina Jardim, Mark Long, Robert Plotnick, Jacob Vigdor) 2022.

Published in the Journal of Public Economics

Research in Progress

[Putting AI on the Org Chart: Evidence on Delegation and Oversight](#) (with Megan Hsu, Julie Bedard, and Matt Kropp).

Motivated by the potential for large productivity gains from AI, firms are increasingly deploying agentic AI systems capable of independent action. Some firms have also begun formally integrating these agents into their organizational structures—assigning them designated roles and responsibilities, and in some cases explicitly referring to them as employees. This creates new challenges for manager’s decisions about when to delegate and how to monitor work. In a survey of 1,261 managers we find that 23% already work in organizations where AI agents have been formally institutionalized on organizational charts. In a randomized experiment we provide those managers with identical documents containing built in errors, where we vary whether the drafts are presented as produced by an AI tool, an AI employee, or a human employee. Average effects to error catching are small. However, in the subgroup of managers whose organizations already have ‘AI employees’, presenting identical drafts as produced by an AI employee (versus an AI tool) reduces managers’ monitoring intensity by 16%, increases their reliance on additional review from others, and shifts their perceived accountability away from themselves and toward the AI system. The human employee condition shows that this is not simply a response to delegation, in fact, managers do the most direct oversight when told the work came from a human employee. These results suggest that embedding AI agents into formal organizational roles can reduce managerial oversight in AI-mediated work, and should be understood as a governance decision rather than a mere labeling choice.

[Generative AI and Labor Market Matching Efficiency](#) (with John Horton), 2025.

Under review

- Media coverage: New York Times

Reductions in private search costs due to advances in information technology can theoretically improve market efficiency. However, this improvement is not guaranteed—changes in private search costs can have unclear welfare implications if they lead to negative externalities. We consider the market efficiency effects of the introduction of an AI tool into a labor market, which lowered employers’ search costs by randomly offering them AI-written first drafts of their job post. The assistance was widely accepted and treated employers were 19% more likely to post a job; those posting spent 44% less time writing. Despite the substantial increase in job posts, there was no discernible increase in matches. The lack of match formation was mostly due to marginal jobs being posted by employers with lower hiring intent, while up to a fifth of missing matches resulted from lowered hiring probability among inframarginal jobs. We provide evidence that the treated job posts were more generic and less informative to jobseekers. This combination of increased job post volume and reduced informativeness diluted signals of employer seriousness, wasting jobseeker time and leading to welfare losses per job post that were six times greater for jobseekers than the time savings benefit for employers. These negative efficiency effects persisted even after widespread adoption, demonstrating that in this context, reducing private search costs harmed market efficiency.

[The Diminishing Returns to Human Recruiting in Online Labor Markets](#) (with John Fallon and John Horton)

Employers often rely on outside recruiters to find workers, but it is unclear whether human intermediaries add value when employers already have access to algorithmic screening tools. We study a randomized experiment in a large online labor market that assigned human recruiting assistance to job postings. Treated employers received 16% more applications and conducted 35% more interviews but were no more likely to hire than control employers with access only to algorithmic tools. Match quality declined: treated employers spent less on hires and their workers completed fewer hours. We develop a model of delegated recruiting in which recruiters and employers rely on a common noisy signal, which can generate these patterns when their assessments are highly correlated. Consistent with this mechanism, recruited applicants are positively selected on engagement-related characteristics yet do not improve hiring outcomes. These findings suggest that as algorithmic screening improves, the scope for intermediaries to add value shrinks because it becomes harder to access independent information.

[Workers Responses to Price Uncompetitiveness: Evidence from a Field Experiment](#) (with Apostolos Filippas and John Horton)

If and how to regulate online marketplaces is an open question important to both platform designers and policy makers. Using a large field experiment in an online labor market, we analyze the effects of a platform minimum wage. Workers were randomly assigned individual price floors which prevented treated workers from bidding hourly rates below their floor. Workers for whom the floor was likely binding—those historically bidding below the floor—suffered a decline in job-finding probability(30%), but higher wages conditional upon being hired(9%). Treated workers made lower earnings overall, but higher earnings conditional on working at least one hour on the platform. Despite a job being “worth more” if hired, affected workers lowered their search intensity. They did not move to the “uncovered sector”—jobs with a fixed price rather than an hourly wage, nor did they direct their search to better fitting jobs. They were also more likely to exit the platform. After the conclusion of the experiment, the platform rolled out the \$3 per hour minimum wage platform wide, allowing us to observe the the employment outcomes and job search behavior in equilibrium.

[Payroll, revenue, and labor demand effects of the minimum wage](#) (with Ekaterina Jardim) 2019.
Upjohn Institute of Employment Research Working Paper. 19-298

We study the effects of a large increase in Seattle’s minimum wage on business churn, hours, and revenue using Washington State administrative data. We find the minimum wage affected businesses both at the intensive and extensive margins. At the intensive margin, surviving businesses increased labor costs without decreasing hours and saw no reductions in revenue. At the extensive margin, businesses experienced higher rates of exit and newly opened businesses became less labor-intensive. We find the total effect of the minimum wage to low-wage employment, defined as jobs paying 130% of the minimum wage or less, came from changes to the composition of businesses.

Invited presentations

Columbia’s Management, Analytics, and Data Conference	2024
National Association for Business Economics Tech Economic Conference Lightning Talk	2023
Wharton, Conference on Business & AI Presentation	2023
NBER Summer Institute Digital Economics and AI Lighting Round Talk	2023
Conference on the Economics of Information & Communication Technologies Presentation	2023
ASSA/AEA, Labor and Employment Relations Association Presentation	2023
NBER Digitization Tutorial	2022
NBER Economics of Privacy Conference	2022
INFORMS, Platforms Presentation	2022
Workshop on Information Systems (WISE) & Economics, Platforms Presentation	2022
Conference on Digital Experimentation, Presentation	2020

Personal Details

Language: English (Native)
Citizenship: USA