Internet Wars

A Course on Strategy & The Internet Ecosystem

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**PROFESSOR:** Jared Earl Grusd

Jared is the CEO of HuffPost and the Global Head of News & Information at Oath. In this capacity, Jared leads Oath’s news and information businesses, including HuffPost, Yahoo News, and the Yahoo and AOL portals. Prior to Oath, Jared oversaw all of AOL’s media brands, including, the Huffington Post, TechCrunch, Engadget, Ryot, Autoblog, Moviefone, and Build. He is an adjunct professor at Columbia Business School specializing in the technology and media sectors. He serves on the board of Newsela, named by Fast Company as one of the most innovative education technology companies, and as a mentor at Techstars. He is an angel investor in several promising start-ups.

Previously, Jared held top leadership positions at several of the world's most innovative companies. He was General Counsel and Global Head of Corporate Development of Spotify, Chief Strategy and Business Development officer of AOL, and a key member of the executive team of Google's multi-billion dollar advertising business in the Americas. Jared also co-founded Shake, a venture-backed legal technology company that was sold to Legal Shield in 2015.

Jared has earned several notable industry accolades. He was named as one of Adweek’s 2015 Class of Young Influentials, which honors 27 individuals who are remaking "business and culture." He was thrice included in Business Insider’s Silicon Alley 100 List, an annual list of the 100 “Coolest and Most Influential” people in NY tech. He was included in TechWeek’s Top 100 List for his "significant impact on the technology and innovation ecosystem." Jared was named as one of the five most powerful technology lawyers by Fortune.

Jared spent the early part of his career specializing in strategic corporate and technology transactions at Capgemini North America and at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. He received a MBA from Columbia Business School, a JD, with Honors, from the University of Chicago Law School, and a BA from the University of Pennsylvania.

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**Course Description:**

The Internet is contributing to economic growth that exceeds the pace of the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s. The Internet is not only transforming the global economy, creating enormous value for companies, investors and consumers, but is also transforming our daily lives. Fueled by the unprecedented growth of private and public technology companies like Apple, Google, Amazon, Alibaba, Facebook, Uber and others, the Internet economy has captured the imagination of the world. As major technology companies battle to control the underlying tech platforms, there is also an unprecedented number of start-ups valued at more than a billion dollars that are trying to disrupt every sector of the economy. The emergence of these highly funded and valued companies may imply seismic changes in how companies are built, financed and compete and how industries are formed going forward.

This class seeks to explore many of the current trends taking place in the Internet and technology ecosystems, with an emphasis on industry analysis, strategy and the application of a range of fields from finance, economics, game theory, history and psychology, to analyze the strategic decisions and interactions of firms within the ecosystem. We will rely mostly on business school cases, publicly available documents, and current news to assist in our discussions. Students should end the course with more confidence applying skills learned in other courses into marketplaces that are dynamic and uncertain and with a deeper insight into the sector.

**Grading and Assignments:**

Class Participation – 30%

1 Short Memo – 20%

1 Group Project – 50%

Please email assignments to internetwars15@gmail.com

**Schedule and Readings:**

**Class 1: Class Introduction & Review of Business Concepts**

Business Insiders Future of Digital 2015

Valuing High Tech Companies – McKinsey & Company

Note on Valuation of Venture Capital Deals - <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/E95-PDF-ENG>

**\* Note:** For Optional Readings to Read Throughout the Course See End of Syllabus

**Class 2: Music**

Legal and Profitable? Spotify: The Challenges of an Online Music Service, HBS Case, <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/HEC110-PDF-ENG>

<https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/content/IES473-PDF-ENG>

Pandora Radio: Fire Unprofitable Customers? <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/610077-PDF-ENG>

Optional Readings

All You Need to Know About the Music Business: Seventh Edition by Donald S. Passman (Nov 17, 2009)

Entertainment Industry Economics: A Guide for Financial Analysis by Harold L. Vogel (Dec 20, 2010)

**Class 3 Platforms: Commerce & Search**

“Microsoft’s Search.” HBS Case No. 709461-PDF-ENG. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2009.

Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/513060-PDF-ENG>

Google Inc in 2014, <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/915004-PDF-ENG>,

The Entrepreneur’s Dilemma: Alibaba, Tencent and Amazon as E-Commerce Platforms <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/W15355-PDF-ENG>

Amazon.com, Inc <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/MH0031-PDF-ENG>

Reinventing E-Commerce – Amazon’s Bet on Unmanned Vehicle Delivery - <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/KEL911-PDF-ENG> -

**Class 4 Platforms: Social & Mobile**

Facebook 2012, Stanford GSB Case E-468. September 1, 2012.

Facebook, HBS Case No. 9-808-128. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Publishing, March 20, 2014.

Twitter, HBS Case No. 9-710-455, Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Publishing, January 30, 2014.

 “Apple in 2013: How to Sustain a Competitive Advantage? <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/MH0019-PDF-ENG>

How Apple’s Corporate Strategy Drove High Growth <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/BOS022-PDF-ENG>

**Class 5: Media**

“Netflix.” HBS Case No. 909M93-PDF-ENG. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2010.

“YouTube, Google, and the Rise of Internet Video.” HBS Case No. KEL403-PDF-ENG. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2010.

The Huffington Post - <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/810086-PDF-ENG> -

The New York Times Paywall - <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/512077-PDF-ENG>

Vice Media: Competitive Advantage and Global Expansion - <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/W14037-PDF-ENG>

Buzzfeed: The Promise of Native Advertising <https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/product/714512-PDF-ENG>

Optional Readings:

The Business of Media Distribution: Monetizing Film, TV and Video Content in an Online World by Jeff Ulin

This Business of Television by Howard J. Blumenthal, Oliver R. Goodenough and Howard Blumenthal (Mar 1, 2006)

**Class 6: Wrap-Up**

**No required readings.**

**Optional Readings:**

The End of Competitive Advantage, Rita McGrath

Webinar: http://blogs.hbr.org/2013/08/the-end-of-competitive-advanta/

Strategy and the Business Landscape (3rd Edition) by Penkaj Ghemawat (July 12, 2009)

Competition Demystified: A Radically Simplified Approach to Business Strategy by Bruce Greenwald and Judd Kahn (Aug 28, 2007)

The Innovator's Dilemma: The Revolutionary Book that Will Change the Way You Do Business by Clayton M. Christensen (Oct 4, 2011)

Digital Wars: Apple, Google, Microsoft and the Battle for the Internet by Charles Arthur (Apr 28, 2012).

In The Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives by Steven Levy (Apr 12, 2011)

Vanity Fair Microsoft article http://www.vanityfair.com/business/2012/08/microsoft-lost-mojo-steve-ballmer

Bill Gates memo: http://www.justice.gov/atr/cases/exhibits/20.pdf

The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook: A Tale of Sex, Money, Genius and Betrayal by Ben Mezrich (Sep 28, 2010)

The Facebook Effect: The Inside Story of the Company That Is Connecting the World by David Kirkpatrick (Hardcover - Jun 8, 2010)

Hatching Twitter: A True Story of Money, Power, Friendship and Betrayal by Nick Bilton (November 5, 2013) <http://www.amazon.com/Hatching-Twitter-Story-Friendship-Betrayal/dp/1591846013>

Inside Apple: How America's Most Admired--and Secretive--Company Really Works by Adam Lashinsky (Jan 25, 2012)

Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson (Oct 24, 2011)

Dogfight: How Apple and Google Went to War and Started a Revolution by Fred Vogelstein (November 12, 2013)

AOL.com by Kara Swisher (Jun 29, 1999).

There Must Be a Pony in Here Somewhere: The AOL Time Warner Debacle and the Quest for the Digital Future by Kara Swisher (Oct 26, 2004).