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# Will Ma

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## Employment

2023 – **Columbia University**, New York, NY  
*Associate Professor of Business*  
2019 – 2023 *Assistant Professor of Business*

2018 – 2019 **Google Research**, Cambridge, MA  
*Postdoctoral Researcher, Operations Research Team*

2015 **Jane Street Capital**, New York, NY  
*Trader Intern*

2013 – 2015 **Lunarch Studios Inc.**, Waterloo, ON Canada  
*Co-founder*

I took leave from MIT in 2013 to form the start-up Lunarch Studios, which launched the strategy game *Prismata* on the *Steam* platform.

## Education

2015 – 2018 **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**, Cambridge, MA  
2010 – 2012 *Ph.D. in Operations Research*  
Advisor: David Simchi-Levi

2006 – 2010 **University of Waterloo**, Waterloo, ON Canada  
*B.Math with honors in Pure Mathematics and Combinatorics/Optimization*

## Journal Papers

1. **Online Matching Frameworks under Stochastic Rewards, Product Ranking, and Unknown Patience** with Brian Brubach, Nathaniel Grammel, Aravind Srinivasan  
*Operations Research*, articles in advance
2. **Assortment Planning for Recommendations at Checkout under Inventory Constraints** with Xi Chen, David Simchi-Levi, Linwei Xin  
*Mathematics of Operations Research*, articles in advance

\*covered in Chicago Booth Review, 2018

3. **Tight Guarantees for Static Threshold Policies in the Prophet Secretary Problem** with Nick Arnosti  
*Operations Research*, 2023
4. **Order-optimal Correlated Rounding for Fulfilling Multi-item E-commerce Orders**  
*Manufacturing & Service Operations Management*, 2023  
\*accepted for presentation at Applied and Computational Discrete Algorithms (ACDA), 2023  
\*invited for presentation in Online Algorithms & Online Rounding workshop at FOCS 2023  
\*selected for presentation in the MSOM Supply Chain Management SIG, 2022
5. **When is Assortment Optimization Optimal?**  
*Management Science*, 2023  
\*2nd Place, Rothkopf Junior Researcher Paper Prize for Auctions and Market Design, 2021  
\*selected for spotlight presentation in the INFORMS Revenue Management and Pricing Conference, 2022  
\*selected for presentation in the MSOM Service SIG, 2021
6. **Fairness Maximization among Offline Agents in Online-Matching Markets** with Pan Xu, Yifan Xu  
*ACM Transactions on Economics and Computation (TEAC)*, 2023
7. **Revenue-Optimal Deterministic Auctions for Multiple Buyers with Ordinal Preferences over Fixed-Price Items**  
*ACM Transactions on Economics and Computation (TEAC)* (invited submission), 2022
8. **Bifurcating Constraints to Improve Approximation Ratios for Network Revenue Management with Reusable Resources** with Jackie Baek  
*Operations Research* (Technical Note), 2022
9. **Distributionally Robust Linear and Discrete Optimization with Marginals** with Louis Chen, Karthik Natarajan, David Simchi-Levi, Zhenzhen Yan  
*Operations Research*, 2022
10. **Inventory Balancing with Online Learning** with Wang Chi Cheung, David Simchi-Levi, Xinshang Wang  
*Management Science*, 2022
11. **Dynamic Pricing (and Assortment) under a Static Calendar** with David Simchi-Levi, Jinglong Zhao  
*Management Science*, 2021
12. **On Policies for Single-leg Revenue Management with Limited Demand Information** with David Simchi-Levi, Chung-Piaw Teo  
*Operations Research*, 2021
13. **Algorithms for Online Matching, Assortment, and Pricing with Tight Weight-dependent Competitive Ratios** with David Simchi-Levi  
*Operations Research*, 2020  
\*Finalist, George E. Nicholson Student Paper Competition, 2017

14. **Separation between Second Price Auctions with Personalized Reserves and the Revenue Optimal Auction** with Balasubramanian Sivan  
*Operations Research Letters*, 2020
15. **Strong Mixed-Integer Programming Formulations for Trained Neural Networks** with Ross Anderson, Joey Huchette, Christian Tjandraatmadja, Juan Pablo Vielma  
*Math Programming*, 2020
16. **Improvements and Generalizations of Stochastic Knapsack and Markovian Bandits Approximation Algorithms**  
*Mathematics of Operations Research*, 2018  
\*2nd place, INFORMS Optimization Society Student Paper Competition, 2017
17. **Packing and Covering Triangles in Planar Graphs** with Qing Cui, Penny Haxell  
*Graphs and Combinatorics*, 2009

## Working Papers

1. **Random-order Contention Resolution via Continuous Induction: Tightness for Bipartite Matching under Vertex Arrivals** with Calum MacRury
2. **Real-Time Personalized Order Holding** with Mohammad Reza Aminian, Linwei Xin
3. **Assortment and Inventory Planning under Stockout-Based Substitution: The Many-Products Regime** with Jingwei Zhang, Huseyin Topaloglu  
Major Revision in *Operations Research*
4. **Order Selection Problems in Hiring Pipelines** with Boris Epstein  
Minor Revision in *Operations Research*
5. **Tight Guarantees for Multi-unit Prophet Inequalities and Online Stochastic Knapsack** with Jiashuo Jiang, Jiawei Zhang  
Major Revision in *Operations Research*  
\*Jiashuo Jiang was a Finalist in the George E. Nicholson Student Paper Competition, 2022  
\*Jiashuo Jiang was a Finalist for the Jeff McGill Student Paper Award for Revenue Management and Pricing, 2021
6. **Beyond IID: Data-Driven Decision-Making in Heterogeneous Environments** with Omar Besbes, Omar Mouchtaki  
Major Revision in *Management Science*
7. **Dynamic Pricing for Reusable Resources: The Power of Two Prices** with Santiago Balseiro, Wenxin Zhang
8. **From Contextual Data to Newsvendor Decisions: On the Actual Performance of Data-Driven Algorithms** with Omar Besbes, Omar Mouchtaki  
Major Revision in *Management Science*

9. **The Benefits of Delay to Online Decision-Making** with Yaqi Xie, Linwei Xin  
Major Revision in *Management Science*  
\*covered in Chicago Booth Review, 2023  
\*selected for presentation in the MSOM Supply Chain Management SIG, 2023
10. **On (Random-order) Online Contention Resolution Schemes for the Matching Polytope of (Bipartite) Graphs** with Calum MacRury, Nathaniel Grammel  
Major Revision in *Operations Research*
11. **Degeneracy is OK: Logarithmic Regret for Network Revenue Management with Indiscrete Distributions** with Jiashuo Jiang, Jiawei Zhang  
Major Revision in *Operations Research*
12. **A Nonparametric Framework for Online Stochastic Matching with Correlated Arrivals** with Ali Aouad  
R & R in *Management Science*
13. **Online Bipartite Matching with Advice: Tight Robustness-Consistency Tradeoffs for the Two-Stage Model** with Billy Jin  
R & R in *Management Science*  
\*Billy Jin was Winner of Student Paper Prize of INFORMS Decision Analysis Society, 2023
14. **Improved Guarantees for Offline Stochastic Matching via new Ordered Contention Resolution Schemes** with Brian Brubach, Nathaniel Grammel, Aravind Srinivasan  
Minor Revision in *Mathematics of Operations Research*
15. **Multi-Stage and Multi-Customer Assortment Optimization With Inventory Constraints** with Elaheh Fata, David Simchi-Levi  
Major Revision in *Operations Research*
16. **A Competitive Analysis of Online Knapsack Problems with Unit Density** with David Simchi-Levi, Jinglong Zhao  
Major Revision in *Management Science*

## Conference Papers

1. **Tightness without Counterexamples: A New Approach and New Results for Prophet Inequalities** with Jiashuo Jiang, Jiawei Zhang  
*Economics and Computation (EC)*, 2023
2. **A Nonparametric Framework for Online Stochastic Matching with Correlated Arrivals** with Ali Aouad  
*Economics and Computation (EC)*, 2023
3. **Order-optimal Correlated Rounding for Fulfilling Multi-item E-commerce Orders**  
*Economics and Computation (EC)*, 2023
4. **Optimizing for Strategy Diversity in the Design of Video Games** with Oussama Hanguir, Christopher Thomas Ryan  
*Integer Programming and Combinatorial Optimization (IPCO)*, 2023

5. **On (Random-order) Online Contention Resolution Schemes for the Matching Polytope of (Bipartite) Graphs** with Calum MacRury, Nathaniel Grammel  
*Symposium on Discrete Algorithms (SODA)*, 2023
6. **Order Selection Problems in Hiring Pipelines** with Boris Epstein  
*Web and Internet Economics (WINE)*, 2022  
**Constructing Demand Curves from a Single Observation of Bundle Sales** with David Simchi-Levi  
*Web and Internet Economics (WINE)*, 2022
7. **Beyond IID: Data-Driven Decision-Making in Heterogeneous Environments** with Omar Besbes, Omar Mouchtaki  
*Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, 2022
8. **Online Bipartite Matching with Advice: Tight Robustness-Consistency Tradeoffs for the Two-Stage Model** with Billy Jin  
*Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, 2022
9. **Tight Guarantees for Static Threshold Policies in the Prophet Secretary Problem** with Nick Arnosti  
*Economics and Computation (EC)*, 2022
10. **When is Assortment Optimization Optimal?**  
*Economics and Computation (EC)*, 2022
11. **Group-level Fairness Maximization in Online Bipartite Matching** with Pan Xu, Yifan Xu  
*Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems (AAMAS)*, 2022
12. **Tight Guarantees for Multi-unit Prophet Inequalities and Online Stochastic Knapsack** with Jiashuo Jiang, Jiawei Zhang  
*Symposium on Discrete Algorithms (SODA)*, 2022
13. **Fairness Maximization among Offline Agents in Online-Matching Markets** with Pan Xu, Yifan Xu  
*Web and Internet Economics (WINE)*, 2021
14. **Improved Guarantees for Offline Stochastic Matching via new Ordered Contention Resolution Schemes** with Brian Brubach, Nathaniel Grammel, Aravind Srinivasan  
*Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, 2021
15. **Follow Your Star: New Frameworks for Online Stochastic Matching with Known and Unknown Patience** with Brian Brubach, Nathaniel Grammel, Aravind Srinivasan  
*Artificial Intelligence and Statistics (AISTATS)*, 2021
16. **Reaping the Benefits of Bundling under High Production Costs** with David Simchi-Levi  
*Artificial Intelligence and Statistics (AISTATS)*, 2021
17. **Revenue-Optimal Deterministic Auctions for Multiple Buyers with Ordinal Preferences over Fixed-Price Items**  
*Web and Internet Economics (WINE)*, 2020

18. **The Convex Relaxation Barrier, Revisited: Tightened Single-Neuron Relaxations for Neural Network Verification** with Christian Tjandraatmadja, Ross Anderson, Joey Huchette, Krunal Patel, Juan Pablo Vielma  
*Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, 2020
19. **Distributionally Robust Max Flows** with Louis Chen, Jim Orlin, David Simchi-Levi  
*Symposium on Simplicity in Algorithms (SOSA)*, 2020
20. **Tight Weight-dependent Competitive Ratios for Online Edge-weighted Bipartite Matching and Beyond** with David Simchi-Levi  
*Economics and Computation (EC)*, 2019
21. **Improvements and Generalizations of Stochastic Knapsack and Markovian Bandits Approximation Algorithms**  
*Symposium on Discrete Algorithms (SODA)*, 2014
22. **A Geometric Approach to Combinatorial Fixed-point Theorems** with Elyot Grant  
*European Conference on Combinatorics, Graph Theory and Applications (EUROCOMB)*, 2013
23. **The Approximability and Integrality Gap of Interval Stabbing and Independence Problems** with Shalev Ben-David, Elyot Grant, Malcolm Sharpe  
*Canadian Conference on Computational Geometry (CCCG)*, 2012

## Cases

1. **Ventilator Rationing during the Covid-19 Pandemic**  
*Columbia CaseWorks*  
\*Finalist, Informs Case Competition, 2020

## Grants

*Columbia Center of AI Technology (CAIT)* in collaboration with *Amazon*, “**Joint Selection and Inventory Optimization under Limited Capacity**”, joint with Huseyin Topaloglu  
Amount: \$150,000; Duration: January 2022–June 2023

## Teaching

Spring 2021, 2023      **Columbia B9136 (PhD, Topics in Revenue and Supply Chain Management)**  
*Instructor*

Spring 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023      **Columbia B8108/B8109 (MBA, Supply Chain Management)**  
*Instructor*

Spring 2017      **MIT 15.762/15.763 (Supply Chain Management)**  
*Co-instructor*

January 2012, 2013, 2016      **MIT 15.S50 (Special Seminar in Management)**  
*Instructor and Course Designer*

This is a course I designed based on my experience as a former professional poker player. It consists of eight 90-minute lectures and two problem sets, which grant a 1/4-credit at MIT. I use the game of poker to illustrate concepts in probability and statistics, and more generally, as a framework within which to think about difficult decisions, uncertainty, risk, and a good outcome vs. a good decision. This has now become a yearly course at MIT, and has been placed onto MIT OpenCourseWare. Furthermore, I have been invited to give the introductory lecture from this course, “The Joy of Making Good Decisions”, at various venues, including *Google New York*, *Riot Games*, the *MIT Entrepreneurship Center*, and for the *MIT Master of Finance* program.

## Academic Mentorship

**Current students:** Omar Mouchtaki (Columbia DRO; co-advised with Omar Besbes), Boris Epstein (Columbia DRO), Wenxin Zhang (Columbia DRO; co-advised with Santiago Balseiro), Yaqi Xie (Chicago Booth; co-advised with Linwei Xin)

**Other student collaborators:** Billy Jin (Cornell ORIE), Nathaniel Grammel (Maryland CS), Mohammad Aminian (Chicago Booth)

**Former students:** Jiashuo Jiang (NYU Stern Ph.D. 2022; co-advised with Jiawei Zhang)

**Thesis committee member:** Xingyu Zhang (Columbia IEOR Ph.D. 2021), Oussama Hanguir (Columbia IEOR Ph.D. 2022), Judy Gan (Columbia DRO Ph.D. 2023), Noemie Perivier (Columbia IEOR Ph.D. 2023), Harsh Sheth (Columbia IEOR Ph.D. 2023)

## Other Professional Activities

Associate Editor for journals: *Management Science*

Program Committee for conferences: WINE 2023 (Senior PC), EC 2023, WINE 2022, EC 2022, WINE 2021, EC 2021

Reviewer for journals: *Mathematics of Operations Research*, *Naval Research Logistics*, *Operations Research*, *Production and Operations Management*, *Management Science*, *Algorithmica*, *SIAM Journal on Discrete Mathematics*, *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management*, *INFORMS Journal on Computing*, *ACM Transactions on Economics and Computation*, *Transportation Science*, *SIAM Journal on Computing*

Reviewer for conferences: STOC 2024, SODA 2024, NeurIPS 2023, ESA 2023, STOC 2023, IPCO 2023, ITCS 2022, NeurIPS 2022, ESA 2022, SODA 2021, SODA 2020, SODA 2018

Co-chair for Revenue Management & Pricing (RMP) Cluster at INFORMS Annual Meeting, 2022

Co-organizer of IEOR-DRO seminar series at Columbia, 2021 –

Organizer of DSL seminar series at MIT, 2016 – 2018

Visiting Scholar, hosted by Prof. Chung-Piaw Teo of the Department of Analytics & Operations in NUS Business School, January 2017

Co-supervisor (with David Simchi-Levi) of Arjun Khandelwal through the MIT Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), working on “Predicting User Choice in Video Games”

## Invited Talks

- 2023 Cornell ORIE seminar series; Cornell Johnson, OTIM seminar
- 2022 Columbia DRO Brown Bag seminar; Tiger Analytics academic seminar; Simons Institute weekly seminar for Data-driven Decision Processes program; Berkeley IEOR weekly seminar; 3rd Workshop on Information and Learning, IESE Barcelona; MIT Operations Research seminar series; UIUC ISE weekly seminar
- 2021 University of Maryland, Theory CS group CATS seminar; HKUST Business School, ISOM seminar; 2nd Workshop on Information and Learning, virtual; NYU Stern, OM seminar; Stanford Business School, OIT seminar
- 2020 CBS PFS No Free Lunch seminar; UMD Smith; USC Marshall
- 2019 NJIT Tuchman; Cornell Tech; DSL seminar, MIT; 1st Workshop on Information and Learning, IESE Barcelona; Core Data Science, Facebook Research; Algorithms Seminar, Google Research NYC
- 2018 Duke Fuqua, Operations Management; Columbia IEOR-DRO seminar; Harvard Kennedy School, Quantitative Analysis; WUSTL Olin, Operations and Manufacturing Management; Georgia Tech ISyE; CMU Tepper, Operations Research; UW Foster, Operations Management; UCLA Anderson, Decisions, Operations, and Technology Management; Chicago Booth, Operations Management
- 2017 UVA Darden, Quantitative Analysis; INSEAD, Technology and Operations Management; Northwestern Kellogg, Operations Management; Dartmouth Tuck, Operations and Management Science; MIT Sloan, Operations Management seminar; Stanford Market Innovation Workshop; Princeton ORFE; NYU Stern, Operations Management seminar; NUS Business School, Analytics & Operations seminar; SUTD Engineering Systems and Design seminar
- 2016 Cornell ORIE Ph.D. Student Workshop

## Outside Activities

Columbia Business School requires faculty members to disclose any activities that might present a real or apparent conflict of interest. I currently have no outside activities fitting this description.