

Economic Inquiry is excited to announce a Symposium on the Economics of Consumer Protection. The goal of this symposium is to create a unique reference on consumer protection economics topics that would (a) synthesize what is known about the current state of economic analyses of consumer protection law enforcement and policy, (b) identify open consumer protection policy questions in need of more refined economic analysis, and (c) advance the application of economics to consumer protection policy analysis and law enforcement. The symposium will also celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1978 founding of a division of economists devoted to consumer protection at the Federal Trade Commission. Papers related to the Federal Trade Commission's dual mission to protect consumers and promote competition are particularly welcome.

Consumer protection economics draws from various fields of applied microeconomics, including the economics of information, labor economics, economics of the household, industrial organization, experimental economics, behavioral economics, law and economics, regulatory economics, and welfare economics, as well as applied statistics, and econometrics. We invite submissions from a broad range of fields using a variety of techniques, including new theoretical models, targeted literature reviews or meta-analyses, and empirical research, including econometric analysis, surveys, and experiments.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Analysis of consumer protection law enforcement and policy within a law and economics framework, including research on optimal deterrence and the efficiency of holding different parties, including intermediaries and third parties, liable.
- Valuation of product and service characteristics without clear market prices, such as privacy, the risk of identity theft, and health impacts.
- Cost-Benefit analysis of consumer protection regulations and law enforcement actions.
- Theoretical and empirical research to estimate consumer injury from unfair or deceptive practices, including monetary injury and injury from lost time or other non-monetary sources.
- Description and analysis of existing business practices, including marketing, pricing, product innovation, data collection, data sharing, data security, customer service, and return policy, which can help establish a baseline estimate of the cost structure and risk management methods of efficient business activity.
- Analysis of mandatory and voluntary information disclosures on business practices, consumer knowledge, consumer behavior, prices, and innovation.
- Assessments of alternative consumer behavior models, such as constrained utility maximization models and behavioral models, for consumer policy development.

- Economic models assessing the distinction between legitimate multi-level marketing organizations and harmful pyramid schemes.
- Research on how to identify emerging consumer protection problems using consumer complaints, reviews, and other data.
- Analysis and comparison of the role of economic analysis in consumer protection law and antitrust law, and the implications of any differences for consumer welfare and social welfare.
- Analysis of issues at the intersection of competition and consumer protection, for example, analysis of how legitimate firms compete with firms that engage in deceptive or unfair practice towards consumers, and how to use law enforcement or policy tools to ensure a level play field among legitimate firms.

Symposium Editors:

Janis K. Pappalardo, Federal Trade Commission
 Wesley W. Wilson, University of Oregon and *Economic Inquiry* Editor

Submission Due Date:

Submissions are due on May 15, 2018.

Submission Process:

Please follow the standard *Economic Inquiry* submission procedures and note that you would like your submission to be considered the Consumer Protection Economics Symposium Issue. Instructions are available at www.weai.org/Submission-Instructions.

Consumer Protection Economics Conference:

Papers submitted for the symposium will be considered for presentation at a conference on the Economics of Consumer Protection to be held at the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, DC on December 7, 2018.

Western Economic Association International Conferences:

Interested authors are encouraged to submit research for these upcoming conferences:

- 93rd Annual Conference, June 26-30, 2018, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
- 15th International Conference, March 21-24, 2019, Tokyo, Japan
- 94th Annual Conference, June 28-July 2, 2019, San Francisco, California

Complete info is available at www.weai.org.