Search and Web Advertising Strategies and Their Effects on Consumers

On September 15, 2010, the Innovation & Regulation Chair held a conference on "Search and Web Advertising Strategies and Their Effects on Consumers". The event, which took place on the campus of Télécom ParisTech, featured seven presentations, given by a group of researchers from some of the world's foremost centers of expertise in this fascinating area of research, spanning the fields of economics, marketing and computer science.

Hal Varian, Google's Chief Economist, delivered the Keynote Lecture, entitled "Predicting the Present with Google Trends". The talk emphasized the astounding richness of data that is recorded by the world's largest search engine. This data can be used to predict, with surprising accuracy, the evolution of a large set of economic variables, and, unlike official government data, it is available in real time.

The other presentations each touched on a different one of the major issues of current interest connected to search engines and online advertising :

- Gilles Saint-Paul, of Toulouse School of Economics and recipient of the Yrjö Jahnsson Award for outstanding European economist under 45, spoke about the role of search engines on economic growth,
- Catherine Tucker, of MIT's Sloan School of Management, presented her work on the impact of privacy regulation on online advertising,
- Zsolt Katona, of the University of California at Berkeley, discussed the incentives for websites to engage in "search engine optimization",
- Onno Zoeter, of the Xerox Research Centre Europe, in Grenoble, gave a talk on search engine ad auctions, from a machine learning perspective.
- Emilio Calvano of Bocconi University, analyzed the effects of online advertising on the news media.
- Alexander White, of Harvard University, who assembled the conference's program on behalf of the Chair, discussed the coordination issues facing different websites that share a common set of users.