

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar

Constructing Paper Sets: Using a focal problem to publish multiple papers and build a research agenda

By



Prof. Jason Bennett Thatcher
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Date : 22 Jun 2026 (Mon)
Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon
Venue : M802, PolyU

Abstract

Early-career scholars often face a difficult publication challenge: one ambitious paper is rarely enough to build a durable academic record, but opportunistic publishing can leave a research agenda feeling scattered and hard to explain. This talk introduces the idea of constructing “paper sets”: deliberately designed clusters of papers anchored in a focal research problem. Rather than treating each manuscript as an isolated project, a paper set helps scholars build coherence, momentum, and scholarly identity through multiple connected contributions.

The talk will explain how to identify a focal problem capable of sustaining several papers, how to distinguish a genuine research agenda from a single-manuscript idea, and how to assign distinct scholarly roles to papers within a set. These roles may include theory development, literature synthesis, method or measurement work, core empirical testing, mechanism and boundary analysis, and extensions into new settings or outcomes. The session will also discuss how to sequence papers strategically, beginning with an executable anchor paper and moving toward more ambitious contributions as evidence, framing, and reviewer insight accumulate.

A further emphasis is placed on team design. Strong paper sets require collaborators selected for their capabilities, not simply for friendship, status, or convenience. The talk offers practical guidance on building core-plus collaboration structures, clarifying authorship and ownership, and managing a portfolio of related papers over time. The central message is that a sustainable research career depends not just on producing papers but on studying consequential problems that continue to generate credible, cumulative questions.

Prof. Jason Bennett Thatcher holds the Tandean Rustandy Esteemed Endowed Chair in the Division of Organizational Leadership, Information, and Analytics at the Leeds School of Business, University of Colorado Boulder. He received degrees from the University of Utah and Florida State University. His work appears in *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. He serves as Senior Editor at *MIS Quarterly* and is a past Senior Editor at *Information Systems Research*. Prof. Thatcher spends his days planning travel to Southeast Asia and daydreaming about spending Mid-Autumn Festival with his father.

All interested are welcome.



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