

A012

August 23, 2017

Dr. Paul Healy
James R. Williston Professor of Business Administration
Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Development
Harvard Business School

Dear Professor Healy:

I am delighted to write this evaluation letter for Dr. Benjamin Edelman's promotion to the rank of Full Professor with Tenure at Harvard Business School.

I am a tenured Professor at [REDACTED]. I joined [REDACTED] faculty in 2003. My research focuses on the economics and behavioral economics of privacy. I remember meeting for the first time Dr. Edelman (then a Ph.D. Student at Harvard) in 2006, [REDACTED] in that very field. I vividly recall being impressed by that young scholar – both because of the quality of the research he was presenting there (on Adverse Selection in Online 'Trust' Certifications; more on this further below in this letter), and because of his delivery of the material: sharp, knowledgeable, and confident. I felt, in that occasion, that Dr. Edelman was likely to become a star in the field of online markets research. Today - about 10 years later - I believe I was not wrong: I consider Dr. Edelman one of the best scholars working at the overlaps of online markets, policy, and fraud.

I believe that Dr. Edelman's case is rather straightforward --- even while acknowledging the fact that Dr. Edelman's research path and publication strategy are anything but ordinary. I write "anything but ordinary" in the best possible sense: Dr. Edelman has been able to uniquely blend economics, computer science, and law expertise into a singular body of work that is

rigorous as much as it has been impactful. There are very few scholars who are able to do that, and at that level. His publication record embodies what rigorous, successful interdisciplinary research *should* be about: publications in top outlets across a variety of disciplines, spanning economics, marketing, computer science; formulating interesting and important research questions; and addressing them in rigorous manners. I see publications in outstanding outlets such as American Economic Review and Quarterly Journal of Economics; and also, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Journal of Marketing Research, Organization Science, Journal of Decision Support Systems, and so forth; I also see leading outlets in computer sciences (e.g., conference proceedings such as ACM EC or Financial Cryptography), as well as highly regarded law and policy outlets. Dr. Edelman's publication list – and, more importantly, his research – is almost an ideal template for outstanding interdisciplinary research on electronic markets.

Across those diverse outlets, and across their various sub-fields, Dr. Edelman's research has been impactful both in academia (his Google Scholar page lists over 4k citations) and in terms of public policy, industry influence, and influence on the public debate over internet competition and innovation. I will provide a couple of examples. The area of Dr. Edelman's research I know best is his work on online advertising. In that field, Dr. Edelman was among the very first to analyse sponsored search marketplaces. His seminal AER article on this topic has been a highly cited and influential piece – one that has been used in internet-related graduate courses and that I have used too in my research. Similarly, his work on fraud in online advertising has been extremely influential in one of the communities I am part of (broadly speaking, the economics of information security and privacy). At the 2006 [REDACTED] I was referring to earlier in my letter, Dr. Edelman presented a simple yet insightful analysis of the relationship between "trust" seals and quality of websites. His study was a clever (and, in the context, novel) application of the concept of adverse selection in online markets. That piece was later published in ACM EC. It may not even be one of Dr. Edelman most technical, or most cited pieces; and yet, it is a great example of the impact and reach of his work: the piece has been often cited in much scholarly work on online fraud, and I have often used it myself in my classes on privacy. Over the years, Dr. Edelman has kept finding new interesting research questions at the overlaps of online markets competition and policy. His body of work on digital platforms, as well as his more recent work on online discrimination, have been of inspiration to my own research.

I mentioned above that Dr. Edelman's research has been impactful also outside academia. Indeed, his reach has been peculiarly broad – be it via academic papers that ended up influencing policy makers or government agencies (I came to learn, from his submitted materials, that the FBI discovered a certain type of online marketing fraud from his work; this does not surprise me, knowing Dr. Edelman, but is nevertheless impressive); or be it via frequent media citations of his

work, or his non-academic writings, which have often exposed misbehaviours and violations by various parties in the online (advertising) eco-system.

I do not feel qualified to comment expertly on Dr. Edelman's teaching cases. I work in a [REDACTED] school and I have little exposure to, and experience with, that type of materials. I can say however that they looked, to me, like the rest of his research: interesting and excellently prepared. I can add that, having seen Dr. Edelman speak at various academic venues, my first impression from about 10 years ago has been confirmed over and over again: as a speaker and communicator, he is razor sharp, clear, extremely knowledgeable and confident.

You asked me to compare Dr. Edelman to other scholars in his cohort. I will focus on individuals I know best, because they work in the economics of security/privacy field, and whom I respect. People like [REDACTED] A028 or [REDACTED] A028. As much as I highly value and respect their research, I find Dr. Edelman's scholarly production more impressive and accomplished. For a closer comparison, I would have to look at scholars who are not in the same cohort as Dr. Edelman, but are in fact his seniors by a few years: scholars like [REDACTED] A021 at [REDACTED] A021 or [REDACTED] A016, who have been exceedingly successful in related fields. Dr. Edelman compares very favorably to them, even though he is actually younger.

In short, I find Dr. Edelman's research highly influential, creative, and rigorous, and his overall body of work as an academic worthy of the promotion you are considering him for. I would feel lucky to have a colleague such as him here at [REDACTED]. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly for any further query or information.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] A012