

Opening Remarks for Erik Bohlin
Ivey Workshop on Measuring the Digital Economy
December 3, 2025

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome!

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississawgas of the Credit, the Ahnishinnabeg, the Chipaywa, the Hodennashownee and the Wendat peoples. We recognize and respect that these Nations have individual and unique cultures, customs, and languages. We recognize the Treaties that are specific to this area, and our responsibility to work towards achieving Truth and Reconciliation with our Indigenous communities. We are grateful to live and work on this land, and we recognize the enduring presence and contributions of Indigenous peoples to this city and this country.

Maps are never neutral. They are assertions of what we value. Historically, the economic maps of this country measured resources—timber, fur, and minerals—but often erased the Indigenous nations who were already here.

Today, in the digital age, we must ensure our new metrics capture and include the full reality of our communities and peoples, rather than repeating the exclusions of the past.

The image of a map is powerful. Imagine trying to understand the functioning of a modern megacity using a map drawn in the 1930s.

We now need new maps – maps for the AI-enabled economy.

The old economic maps— GDP, traditional price indexes—have been useful. But they leave vast new territories blank. They struggle to capture the value of digital platforms, the true quality of connectivity, or the impact of AI on work and welfare.

Today's workshop is about imagining new maps and addressing challenges with the current maps.

How should a world be measured where the most valuable goods often have a marginal cost of zero, and where digital transformation is no longer just a "sector," but the foundation of everything we do.

Over the next few hours, we are going to address important questions:

- Measuring Reality: How to measure what really matters for the AI economy?
- From Metrics to Mandates: How to translate the metrics into mandates, and assessment?
- Measuring the Future: How to keep track of the impact of AI and quantum technologies before they fully reshape the economy?
- Understanding the Impact: How to develop a deeper, research-based understanding on the impact of widespread adoption of these technologies on users and the economy?

Redrawing these maps requires collaboration between the stakeholders: industry, government, researchers, and users.

Let me also draw to your attention that the quest of finding new maps is not a new effort, but with important Canadian contributions. Marc Porat, published in 1977 the seminal contribution “The Information Economy: Definition and Measurement”, a Ph.D. student being advised by Professor Edwin B. Parker of Canada. One of Parker’s other Ph.D. students, Professor Heather Hudson is here with us today!

Now in today's meeting, we have several notable international experts from outside of Canada – Distinguished Professor Yu-li Liu of Shanghai University; Dr. Volker Stocker, Weizenbaum Institute Berlin; Professor Shane Greenstein, Harvard University; Professor Avinash Collis, Carnegie Mellon University; Professor Elizabeth Mack, Michigan State University, and Canadian distinguished members for the panel sessions that we will return to after the break!

I want to extend a sincere thanks:

- To the Lawrence National Centre for Policy and Management here at Ivey for their support;
- To our distinguished speakers and experts from government, academia and industry;
- To our audience, without you there would be no workshop!

Thank you for being here. I am now delighted to introduce my dear friend and co-organizer Romel Mostafa, Director of Lawrence National Centre for Policy and Management, to give some additional thoughts.