

# Preface

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When we began our research on *Digital Entrepreneurship* back in 2016, we were surprised to find no articles written on the subject in the top journals of entrepreneurship – *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice* (ETP) and *Journal of Business Venturing* (JBV). It made us wonder if we had taken interest in the wrong topic, or were perhaps looking in the wrong place. Some nine months into our study, the discipline finally published its first agenda-setting article in ETP. The article confirmed what we were seeing all along – there was urgent need for research on the subject of digital entrepreneurship. Indeed, *Digital Entrepreneurship*, which represents a distinctive form of entrepreneurship in the digital age, calls for urgent theorizing. However, given the complexity and dynamism of the phenomenon, a cross-disciplinary dialogue and plurality of perspectives is needed to fully appreciate its growing significance.

Pervasive digitization has set in motion a paradigmatic shift in economic value creation. Collectively, digital technology-driven changes create difficulties – both conceptual and practical – for students, educators, practitioners, and policymakers who seek to navigate the ‘swampy lowlands’ of the digital age. These difficulties become particularly acute when those interested in entrepreneurship consider digitally-driven new venture creation. Hence, a sharp focus on digital entrepreneurship and its transformative and disruptive effects is needed to help advance conceptual clarity. This will then offer guidance for education and practice. As academic researchers, digital entrepreneurial practitioners, and educators working in this domain over several years, we have been well placed to explore and reflect on the intricacies framing this typology of entrepreneurship. Hence, we write this book to offer advanced undergraduate and graduate students, teachers, academics, practitioners, and policymakers a conceptual and pragmatic guide to the subject of ‘Digital Entrepreneurship.’ All of this is presented in a clear, concise, and action-orientated text.

The material in this book is grounded in our 20 years of academic research in entrepreneurship and over a decade in digital entrepreneurial practice. Our research, which utilized an innovative action design research methodology, resulted in our discovery of new insights into the mechanisms by which a digital entrepreneurial process emerges. More importantly, we identified the fundamental differences between the digital entrepreneurial process versus more traditional entrepreneurial processes. Accepting these differences is the departure point for ensuring that the development of digital new ventures will

result in more productive outcomes. Ultimately, we hope that this book will act as a trusted guide for you on your digital entrepreneurship journey.

However, we recognize that we are at the early stages of these exciting new developments in entrepreneurship and thus hope that you build on this text to advance knowledge in the theory and practice of digital new venture creation. Through our collective efforts, knowledge on this disruptive form of economic value creation will continue to percolate down to those who need it most.

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