

Curriculum Vitae

James E. Bessen

EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, Technology & Policy Research Initiative, Boston University School of Law

Lecturer in Law, Boston University School of Law, 2004 –

Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University, 2010 – 2013

Visiting Scholar, MIT Sloan School of Management, 2002-3

Editor, *Technological Innovation and Intellectual Property*, 2002-8

CEO, Bestinfo Division, Intergraph Corporation, 1993-4

Founder, CEO, Chairman, Bestinfo, 1983-1993 (developed first WYSIWYG desktop publishing program)

EDUCATION

A.B. Harvard College, 1972; Graduate courses in economics

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Bessen, James (2022), *The New Goliaths: How Corporations Use Software to Dominate Industries, Kill Innovation, and Undermine Regulation*, Yale University Press.

Bessen, James (2015), *Learning by Doing: The Real Connection Between Innovation, Wages, and Wealth*, Yale University Press.

Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2008), *Patent Failure: How judges, bureaucrats and lawyers put innovators at risk*, Princeton University Press.

SCHOLARLY ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Bessen, James, Erich Denk, Chen Meng, and Michael Meurer (2025). “Do Salary History Bans Mitigate Discriminatory Hiring Practices?” *Labor Law Journal*, Volume 76, No. 103.

Bessen, James, Erich Denk, and Chen Meng. "Perpetuating wage inequality: evidence from salary history bans." *The Journal of Economic Inequality* 22, no. 3 (2024): 709-733.

Hunt, Jennifer, Iain Cockburn, and James Bessen (2024). “Is Distance from Innovation a Barrier to the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence?” NBER Working Paper w33022.

Bessen, James, Maarten Goos, Anna Salomons and Wiljan Van den Berge (2025), “What Happens to Workers at Firms that Automate?” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 107(1), pp. 125-141.

Sveikauskas, Leo, Rachel Soloveichik, Corby Garner, Peter B. Meyer, James Bessen, and Matthew Russell. "Marketing, Other Intangibles, and Output Growth in 61 United States Industries." *Review of Income and Wealth*, 70:4 (2023), 1190-1215.

Bessen, James, Stephen Michael Impink, Lydia Reichensperger, and Robert Seamans (2022). "The role of data for AI startup growth." *Research Policy* 51, no. 5: 104513.

Bessen, James, Stephen Michael Impink, and Robert Seamans (2022). "The cost of ethical AI development for AI startups." In *Proceedings of the 2022 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society*, pp. 92-106.

Bessen, James. (2021). "Information Technology and the New Capitalism." In *Harnessing Digitalization for Sustainable Economic Development: Insights for Asia*, edited by John Beirne and David Fernandez. Asian Development Bank Institute.

Bessen, James (2020). "Industry Concentration and Information Technology," *Journal of Law and Economics*, 63:531-55.

Bessen, James, Maarten Goos, Anna Salomons and Wiljan Van den Berge (2020), "Firm-Level Automation: Evidence from the Netherlands," *AEA Papers & Proceedings*, 110:389-93.

Bessen, James (2020). "Attitudes to Technology," in Robert Skidelsky, Nan Craig, eds., *Work in the Future: The Automation Revolution*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bessen, James (2020). "Automation and Jobs: When Technology Boosts Employment," *Economic Policy*, 34(100):589-626.

Bessen, James, Maarten Goos, Anna Salomons and Wiljan Van den Berge (2020), "Automation: A Guide for Policymakers," Brookings Institution, Future of the Middle Class Initiative.

Morgan R. Frank, David Autor, James E. Bessen, Erik Brynjolfsson, Manuel Cebrian, David J. Deming, Maryann Feldman, Matthew Groh, Jose Lobo, Esteban Moro, Dashun Wang, Hyejin Youn, and Iyad Rahwan (March 25, 2019). "Towards Understanding the Impact of AI on Labor." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Bessen, James (2019). "AI and Jobs: The Role of Demand" in *The Economics of AI: An agenda*, NBER.

Bessen, J., & Nuvolari, A. (2019). Diffusing new technology without dissipating rents: some historical case studies of knowledge sharing. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 28(2), 365-388.

Bessen, James (2018), "The Policy Challenge of AI," *CPI Antitrust Chronicle*, June 2018.

Bessen, James, Peter Neuhäusler, John L. Turner, and Jonathan Williams. "Trends in private patent costs and rents for publicly-traded United States firms." *International Review of Law and Economics* 56 (2018): 53-69.

Bessen, James (2016), "Accounting for Rising Corporate Profits: Intangibles or Regulatory Rents?" *Research Briefs in Economic Policy* No. 60, Cato Institute, September 21, 2016.

Bessen, James and Alessandro Nuvolari (2016), "Knowledge Sharing Among Inventors: Some Historical Perspectives," in *Revolutionizing Innovation: Users, Communities and Open Innovation*, Dietmar Harhoff and Karim Lakhani eds., Cambridge: MIT Press.

Bessen, James (2015), "Toil and Technology," *IMF Finance and Development*, March 2015, 52(1).

Bessen, James (2015). "Can Public Policy Influence Private Innovation?" in Robert A. Scott and Stephen M. Kosslyn, editors, *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, John Wiley and Sons.

Bessen, James (2014). Review of "Industry and Revolution: Social and Economic Change in the Orizaba Valley, Mexico." By Gómez-Galvarriato Aurora. *Journal of Economic History* 2: 642-4.

Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2014), "The Direct Costs from NPE Disputes," *Cornell Law Review*, v. 99(2), 387-424.

Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2013), "The Patent Litigation Explosion," *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*, v. 45, 102-145.

Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2013), "The Private Costs of Patent Litigation," *Journal of Law, Economics and Policy*, 9, p. 59-95.

Bessen, James and Brian J. Love (2013), "Make the Patent 'Polluters' Pay: Using Pigovian Fees to Curb Patent Abuse," *4 California Law Review Circuit* 84-91.

Bessen, James (2012), "A Generation of Software Patents," *Boston University Journal of Science and Technology Law*, 18(2), pp. 241-61.

Bessen, James (2012), "More Machines, Better Machines...Or Better Workers?" *Journal of Economic History*, 72(1), pp. 44-74.

Bessen, James, Jennifer Ford, and Michael J. Meurer (2011), "The Private and Social Costs of Patent Trolls," *Regulation* 34(4), pp. 26-35.

Bessen, James (2009), "Evaluating the Economic Performance of Property Systems," *Review of Law and Economics*, Vol. 5 : Iss. 1, Article 1.

- Bessen, James (2009), "Estimates of Patent Rents from Firm Market Value," *Research Policy* 38, pp. 1604-16.
- Bessen, James and Eric Maskin (2009), "Sequential Innovation, Patents, and Imitation," *RAND Journal of Economics*, 40(4) pp. 611-35.
- Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2008) "Of Patents and Property," *Regulation*, 31(4), pp. 18-27.
- Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2008) "Do Patents Perform Like Property?," *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 22(3), pp. 8-20.
- Bessen, James (2008) "The value of U.S. patents by owner and patent characteristics," *Research Policy*, 37, pp. 932-45.
- Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2007) "What's Wrong with the Patent System? Fuzzy Boundaries and the Patent Tax," *First Monday*, volume 12, number 6 (June 2007), URL: http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue12_6/bessen/index.html.
- Bessen, James and Robert M. Hunt (2007), "An Empirical Look at Software Patents," *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy* 16, no. 1, pp. 157-89.
- Bessen, James (2007). Review of Cristiano Antonelli, Dominique Foray, Bronwyn H. Hall and W. Edward Steinmueller, editors, *New Frontiers in the Economics of Innovation and New Technology: Essays in Honour of Paul A. David*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2006 at EH.NET.
- Bessen, James (2006), "Open Source Software: Free Provision of Complex Public Goods," in Jürgen Bitzer and Philipp J. H. Schröder, eds., *The Economics of Open Source Software Development*, Elsevier B. V.
- Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2006), "Patent Litigation with Endogenous Disputes," *American Economic Review*, 96, no. 2, pp. 77-81.
- Bessen, James and Michael J. Meurer (2005), "Lessons for Patent Policy from Empirical Research on Patent Litigation," *Lewis & Clark Law Review*, v. 9, no. 1, pp. 1-27.
- Bessen, James and Eric S. Maskin (2005), "Geistiges Eigentum im Internet: Ist alte Weisheit ewig gültig?" ("Intellectual Property on the Internet: What's Wrong with the Conventional Wisdom?"), in Lutterbeck, Bernd, Robert A. Gehring, and Matthias Bärwolff, *Open Source Jahrbuch 2005: Zwischen Softwareentwicklung und Gesellschaftsmodell*, Berlin: Lehmanns Media.
- Bessen, James (2005), "Patents and the Diffusion of Technical Information," *Economics Letters*, v. 86, no. 1, pp. 121-128.

Bessen, James and Robert M. Hunt (2004), "The Software Patent Experiment," *Business Review*, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Q3 2004, pp. 22-32.

Bessen, James (2004), "Holdup and Licensing of Cumulative Innovations with Private Information," *Economics Letters* v. 82, No. 3, pp. 321-26.

Bessen, James (2003), "Technology and Learning by Factory Workers: The Stretch-Out at Lowell, 1842," *Journal of Economic History*, 63, pp. 33-64.

Bessen, James (2003), "IT Adoption Costs and Productivity: A Reply to Diego Comin," *Review of Economic Dynamics*, 6, pp. 252-62.

Bessen, James (2002), "What Good is Free Software?" in Robert Hahn, editor, *Is Open Source the Future of Software?*, AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, Washington, DC.

Bessen, James (2002), "Technology Adoption Costs and Productivity Growth: The Transition to Information Technology," *Review of Economic Dynamics*, 5, pp. 443-69.

Bessen, James (1993), "Riding the Marketing Information Wave," *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1993, 71, pp. 150-60.

SELECT WORKING PAPERS

Ando, Yoshiki, James Bessen, and Xiupeng Wang (2025). "The Rising Returns to R&D: Ideas are not getting harder to find." CES-25-29, US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies.

Bessen, James, and Xiupeng Wang (2025). "The Intangible Divide: Why Do So Few Firms Invest in Innovation?." CES-25-15, US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies.

Bessen, James (2015). "How Computer Automation Affects Occupations: Technology, Jobs, and Skills" Boston Univ. School of Law, Law and Economics Research Paper No. 15-49

Bessen, James and Grid Thoma (2014) "Which Patent Systems are Better for Inventors?" Boston Univ. School of Law, Law and Economics Research Paper No. 14-50.

Bessen, James (2011), "Was Mechanization De-Skilling? The Origins of Task-Biased Technical Change," Boston Univ. School of Law Working Paper No. 11-13.

Bessen, James (2010), "The Two Faces of Innovation," Boston Univ. School of Law Working Paper No. 10-35.

Bessen, James (2009), "Imperfect Property Rights," Boston University School of Law Working Paper No. 09-46.

Bessen, James (2008), "Accounting for Productivity Growth When Technical Change is Biased," Research on Innovation Working Paper #0802.

Bessen, James (2006), "A Comment on 'Do Patents Facilitate financing in the Software Industry?'" Boston Univ. School of Law Working Paper No. 06-13.

Bessen, James (2003), "Patent Thickets: Strategic Patenting of Complex Technologies."

Bessen, James (2000), "Real Options and the Adoption of New Technologies," Research on Innovation Working Paper.

Bessen, James (1999), "Waiting for Technology: Path Dependence as a Random Walk," working paper.

Bessen, James (1997), "Productivity Adjustments and Learning-by-Doing as Human Capital," Center for Economic Studies (Bureau of the Census) Working Paper, CES-WP-97-17.

RECENT NON-ACADEMIC WRITING

"How big technology systems are slowing innovation." MIT Technology Review Feb. 17, 2022 (2022).

Bessen, James. "Unlocking Frontier Technology: The Policy Challenge of the Digital Economy." Progressive Policy Institute (2021).

MAJOR RESEARCH FUNDING AND AWARDS

2025, Atkinson Prize, Society for the Study of Economic Inequality

2023-25, Sloan Foundation, "Intangibles, productivity, and firm growth"

2022-23, Smith Richardson Foundation

2022-24, Sloan Foundation, "Competing for Talent: Startup growth and the labor market".

2019, Schmidt Futures Foundation, "Addressing the Slow Diffusion of IT," Principal Investigator.

2018-2021, Kauffman Foundation, "The Impact of Information Technology on Entrepreneurship and Industry Structure," Principal Investigator.

2018, Google.org, gift.

2017-2020, Charles Koch Foundation, gifts.

2017, IBM Faculty Award

2008, NSF, SES-0527657 “Harnessing Patent Data for Social Science Research,” Senior Investigator.

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Keynote, “What’s Wrong with R&D?”, Concordi 2025 (European Commission and OECD)

Keynote, “Looking Under the Hood to Understand Startup Performance,” Geoinnov 2024.

“The New Goliaths,” OECD, January 2023.

Keynote, “The Future of Work,” *Financial Times*, October 2022.

Keynote, “AI, Innovation, Productivity, and Work,” OECD, February 2022.

“Information Technology and the New Capitalism,” Asian Development Bank Institute, December 2020.