



Paul H. O'Neill

School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Policy Analysis & Public Finance Speaker Series *and*
Center for Cultural Affairs Bonser Speaker Series

Imke Reimers

Associate Professor of economics at Northeastern University

Friday, March 24th 2023 12:00pm -1:30 pm in A221 and via Zoom

***The First Sale Doctrine and the Digital Challenge to Public Libraries
(joint work with Joel Waldfogel)***

ABSTRACT: Libraries deliver the majority of US book consumption, and library costs are kept low by the first sale doctrine's cap on prices that libraries pay for print but not electronic books. Growth in library ebook prices, however, may imperil libraries. Using data on over 8,000 library systems for 2013-2019, we compare the welfare impacts of higher print vs ebook prices. We document causal impacts of holdings on circulation, and we develop a structural model of patron demand and library holdings to quantify the effects of different policy changes. We show that increased print book prices would have almost ten times the negative patron welfare impact of higher ebook prices.

BIO: Imke Reimers is an associate professor of economics at Northeastern University. She received a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Minnesota in 2013, and she spent a year in the digitization and copyright initiative at the National Bureau of Economic Research before becoming an assistant professor at Northeastern. She is broadly interested in the industrial organization of digital markets, information, and intellectual property. Her research, which has been published in top journal in economics and management science, mainly focuses on two specific questions: 1) how does intellectual property policy affect access to information and cultural goods; and 2) how does information technology affect consumer and firm decisions as well as the functioning and efficiency of markets?



Zoom Link: <https://iu.zoom.us/j/86496548908>