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Employment

2018 - present Assistant Professor of Marketing, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

Education

2008 - 2018 Ph.D, Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
Advisors: Drazen Prelec and Joshua Tenenbaum

2007 - 2013 Ph.D, Mathematics ("Paired-Domination in Graphs")
University of Johannesburg, South Africa
Advisor: Michael Henning

2006 - 2007 Master of Arts in Cognitive Science, *cum laude*
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

2004 - 2005 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Cognitive Science, *cum laude*
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mathematics, *cum laude*
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

2001 - 2003 Bachelor of Science, majors in Computer Science and Mathematics, *summa cum laude*
University of Natal, South Africa

Publications

(* indicates equal authorship)

Working Papers

McCoy, J. and Prelec, D. (2026). Belief decomposition: A mechanism for collective inference. Revise and resubmit at *Management Science*, preprint: `https://ssrn.com/abstract=5170127`

Sterckx, J-L., McCoy, J., and De Langhe, B. (2026). Judgments of Relative Value: What Would You Offer, and What Would You Demand? Under review at *Journal of Consumer Research*, preprint: `https://ssrn.com/abstract=7241878`

McCoy, J. (2026). The Marketer as Concept Engineer. Preprint: `https://ssrn.com/abstract=7251439`

McCoy, J. (2026). Oat Milk, Plant-Based Burgers, and Cauliflower Rice: Evaluating Label-Induced Consumer Category Confusion. Preprint: `https://jpmccoy.com/papers/labeling_consumer_confusion_combo.pdf`

McCoy, J. (2025). Putnam Products: Is Non-alcoholic Beer Beer or Oat Milk Milk? Preprint: `https://ssrn.com/abstract=5164439`

McCoy, J., Ciulli, R., and Bradlow, E. (2022). Two-For-One Conjoint: Bayesian Cross-Category Learning for Shared-Attribute Categories. Reject and resubmit at *Journal of Marketing Research*.

Published Papers

Aka, A.* and McCoy, J.* (2026). Predicting the Memorability of Brand Slogans. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/00222437261481110

McCoy, J. and Prelec, D. (2024). A Bayesian hierarchical model of crowd wisdom based on predicting opinions of others. *Management Science*, 70(9): 5931–5948. doi:10.1287/mnsc.2023.4955

Mellers, B., McCoy, J., Lu, L., and Tetlock, P. (2024). Human and Algorithmic Predictions in Geopolitical Forecasting: Quantifying Uncertainty in Hard-to-Quantify Domains. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 19(5): 711–721. doi:10.1177/17456916231185339

Aka, A., Bhatia, S., and McCoy, J. (2023). Semantic determinants of memorability. *Cognition*, 239: 105497. doi:10.1016/j.cognition.2023.105497

Bigelow, E., McCoy, J.*, and Ullman, T.* (2023). Non-Commitment in Mental Imagery. *Cognition*, 238: 105498. doi:10.1016/j.cognition.2023.105498

Mellers, B., Lu, L., and McCoy, J. (2023). Predicting the future with humans and AI. *Consumer Psychology Review*, 6(1): 109–120. doi:10.1002/arcp.1089

Yin, S., Arkes, H.R., McCoy, J., Cohen, M.E., and Mellers, B.A. (2021). Conflicting Goals Influence Physicians' Expressed Beliefs to Patients and Colleagues. *Medical Decision Making*, 41(5), 505–514. doi:10.1177/0272989X211001841

McCoy, J.* and Ullman, T.* (2019). Judgments of effort for magical violations of intuitive physics, *PLOS One*, 14(5): e0217513. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0217513

McCoy, J. and Ullman, T. (2019). Transformative Decisions and Their Discontents. Part of a symposium on L.A. Paul's "Transformative Experience". *Rivista Internazionale di Filosofia e Psicologia*, 10(3), 339–345. doi:10.4453/rifp.2019.0029

McCoy, J.*, Paul, L.A.*, and Ullman, T.* (2019). Modal Prospection. In *Metaphysics and Cognitive Science*, Goldman, A. & McLaughlin, B. (eds.), Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oso/9780190639679.003.0010

Liu, S., McCoy, J. P., & Ullman, T. D. (2019). People's perception of others' risk preferences. Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 678 - 685.

McCoy, J.* and Ullman, T.* (2018). A Minimal Turing Test. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 79, 1–8. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2018.05.007

Prelec, D., Seung, H. S., & McCoy, J. (2017). A solution to the single-question crowd wisdom problem. *Nature*, 541(7638), 532–535. [Cover article]. doi:10.1038/nature21054

Henning, M.A., McCoy, J. & Southey, J. (2014). Graphs with maximum size and given paired-domination number. *Discrete Applied Mathematics*, 170, 72–82. doi:10.1016/j.dam.2014.01.019

Ullman, T.*, McCoy, J.*, Stuhlmuller, A., Gerstenberg, T. and Tenenbaum, J.B. (2012). Why blame Bob? Probabilistic generative models, counterfactual reasoning, and blame attribution. *Proceedings of the Thirty-fourth Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*, 1996-2001.

Henning, M.A. & McCoy, J. (2011). Which trees have a differentiating-paired dominating set? *Journal of Combinatorial Optimization*, 22(1), 1–18. doi:10.1007/s10878-009-9268-z

Henning, M.A. & McCoy, J. (2009). Total domination in planar graphs of diameter 2. *Discrete Mathematics*, 309, 6181–6189. doi:10.1016/j.disc.2009.05.027

McCoy, J. & Henning, M.A. (2009). Locating and paired-dominating sets in graphs. *Discrete Applied Mathematics*, 157, 3268–3280. doi:10.1016/j.dam.2009.06.019

Dorbec, P., Henning, M.A., & McCoy, J. (2007). Upper total domination versus upper paired-domination. *Quaestiones Mathematicae*, 30(1), 1–12. doi:10.2989/160736007780205693

Selected work in progress

Personal benefit, collective harm: Differential impact of AI on individual and crowd wisdom judgment (with Orchinik, R., Ricardez, E., Prelec, D., and So, E.)

An information conveyance mechanism: Pricing cheap talk

How to find out what people want (with G. Chapman, B. Mellers, C. Olivola, W. Liu, J.L. Sterckx, S. Hirshman, L. Shen, D. Prelec, L. Liu, and S. Smith)

Talks

Conferences/workshops

"Elicitation and aggregation for forecasting", Future of Forecasting: Collective and Artificial Intelligence, Opatija, Croatia, 2026.

"Telling More than we choose: Strength of preference judgments", Choice Symposium, Vail, CO, 2026

"Decomposing beliefs to improve advice seeking and market research", Society for Consumer Psychology, San Diego, 2026

"The marketer as a concept engineer: oat milk, plant-based meat, and non-alcoholic beer", Winter conference on Marketing and Cognition, Steamboat Springs, CO, 2026

"Evaluating slogan memorability", Four School Conference (Wharton, Yale, Columbia, NYU), 2025

"Studying slogan memorability with large language models", as part of a symposium "New Insights from Large Language Models and Natural Language Processing for Consumer Research" (co-organized with A. Aka), Society for Consumer Psychology Annual Conference, Nashville, 2024.

"Slogan memorability at scale", Global Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Business Analytics at Temple workshop, 2024.

"Small sample crowd wisdom with honesty incentives", Society for Judgment and Decision Making, San Francisco, 2023.

"Studying slogan memorability with large language models", as part of a symposium "New Insights from Large Language Models and Natural Language Processing for Consumer Research" (co-organized with A. Aka), Association for Consumer Research Conference, Seattle, 2023.

"Not by Choices Alone: Evaluating Strength of Preference Judgments", Subjective Probability, Utility, and Decision Making, Vienna, 2023.

"Not by Choices Alone: Evaluating Strength of Preference Judgments" (poster), Society for Consumer Psychology, San Juan, 2023.

"Not by Choices Alone: Evaluating Strength of Preference Judgments", Society for Judgment and Decision Making, San Diego, 2022.

"Overcoming crowd wisdom challenges with a Bayesian model of social beliefs", INFORMS Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, 2022.

"Two-for-one Conjoint Bayesian Cross-category Learning for Shared Attribute Categories", Marketing Science conference, virtual, 2022.

African Marketing Confederation, Relaunch event, 2021

"'Zebra' is probably more memorable than 'Tick': Towards predicting the memorability of textual marketing communications", Four School Conference (Wharton, Yale, Columbia, NYU), 2021

"Predicting memorability with distributed semantic representations" (poster, Psychonomic Society 2020); "Modeling memorability with semantic representations", (talk, Society for Mathematical Psychology 2021), "Zebra" is probably more memorable than "Tick," how accurate are people when making memorability predictions? (poster, Society for Consumer Psychology 2021; poster, Society for Judgment and Decision Making 2021). All presented by graduate student co-author, A. Aka.

"Aggregating beliefs using a model of people's predictions of other's beliefs" Society for Consumer Psychology, 2020

"Extracting Wisdom from the Crowd Using Behavioral Insights and Machine Learning", Johns Hopkins Behavioral Science Forum on Artificial Intelligence, Baltimore, 2019

"A Possible Worlds Model: Some Theoretical Connections", Bayesian Crowd Conference, Rotterdam, 2019

"A probabilistic generative model for aggregating judgments by incorporating peer predictions", Bayesian Crowd Conference 2017, 07/04/2017

"Crowd wisdom and the surprisingly popular answer", Economics and Computation 2017 Workshop on Forecasting, 06/27/17

"Modal imagination" (with T. Ullman and L.A. Paul), 2017 Ranch Metaphysics Workshop, 01/26/2017

"Modeling the self in self-transformation" (with T. Ullman), Society for Philosophy & Psychology Preconference workshop 2016

Talks at institutions

KU Leuven, 01/27/26

University of Colorado, Boulder, 04/25/25

University of Chicago, 04/15/25

Stanford, 05/24/2023

Cornell, 05/14/2023

University of Delaware, marketing camp, 05/29/2022

University of Pennsylvania, mindCORE seminar series, 2019

University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Decision Processes Colloquia, 2018

Massachusetts Institute of Technology 09/07/2017

University of Illinois, Chicago, 09/15/2017

University of Texas, Austin, 09/22/2017

University of California, Los Angeles, 09/25/2017

University of Chicago, 09/29/2017

Northwestern University, 10/05/2017

University of California, San Diego, 10/11/2017

University of California, Berkeley, 10/16/2017

Columbia University, 10/24/2017

University of Pennsylvania, 11/02/2017

University of Colorado, Boulder, 11/08/2017

Erasmus University Rotterdam, 11/16/2017

Academic Service

Editorial Review Board for Journal of Marketing Research, 2016-

Organizer for "How to find out what people want: Preference elicitation, tradeoffs, and cognition" workshop (co-organized with Bart de Langhe) as part of 13th Triennial Invitational Choice Symposium (2026).

Journal, conference, prize, and grant proposal reviewing: Econometrica, Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, Journal of Consumer Research, Psychological Science, Cognitive Science, Association for Consumer Research annual conference, Behavioral Decision Research in Management conference, Society for Consumer Psychology annual conference; Subjective Probability, Utility, and Decision Making bi-annual conference; Perspectives on Psychological Science; MSI Dissertation Award; Philosophical Psychology; Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization; Decision; Journal of Expertise; National Science Foundation (Decision, Risk, & Management Sciences) proposals; Preselection committee for Franklin Institute's Bower Award; Nature Human Behaviour; Management Science; Judgment & Decision Making; Journal of Marketing Research, Cognitive Research; Cognitive Science Society Conference; Neural Information Processing Systems, Operations Research, Society for Judgment and Decision Making annual conference, Journal of Risk and Uncertainty, Cognition, Econometrica.

Program committee (meta-reviewer), Cognitive Science Society Conference 2021, 2022, 2023

Tutorials & Workshops Committee, Cognitive Science Society Conference, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Program committee, Workshop on Behavioral Economics and Computation, ACM Economics and Computation 2019

Panels: Wharton Marketing Conference 2020 ("Marketing in a global pandemic", moderator), Data Colada Seminar series (07/17/2020, panelist)

Seminar organization: Wharton Decision Processes colloquium (2022-2027)

Seminar organization: University of Pennsylvania mindCORE seminar committee (2019, chair 2020, 2021)

Seminar organization: Wharton marketing colloquium, Spring 2020

Marketing department committees: curriculum committee, PhD Committee, Chair search committee

Selected Press

My research has been covered in outlets including The Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker, Bloomberg, Scientific American, NPR, Science, Discover Magazine, BBC Future, Quartz, The Verge, Psychology Today, Cnet, Aeon, Pacific Standard, New Statesman and Ars Technica.

Awards and Prizes

International Fulbright Science and Technology Award for Outstanding Foreign Students, 2008 - 2010

Research scholarship from the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2006

University of KwaZulu-Natal Postgraduate Merit Scholarship (awarded twice), 2004 - 2005

Samuel Edelstein Scholarship (Two awarded annually to entering postgraduate students at University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg), 2004

G.I. Bateman Memorial Prize for Mathematics - 2004

University of Natal Undergraduate Prestige Scholarship (Ranked in top three undergraduates across the university), 2003

University of Natal Merit Award (renewed) - 2001 - 2002

Teaching Experience

Wharton, Introduction to Marketing - Undergraduate core, 4 sections (2026)

Wharton, Marketing Management - MBA core, 4 sections (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)

MIT, Teaching assistant for Listening to the Customer (MBA, 3 sections), Strategic Market Measurement (MBA), Applied Behavioral Economics (MBA), Computational Cognitive Science: Probabilistic Programming (Undergraduate and graduate), Cognitive Processes (undergraduate)

Doctoral student mentoring

Ada Aka, joint marketing/psychology program (thesis committee, co-marketing advisor with E. Bradlow, primary advisor: S. Bhatia; first placement: Stanford)

Ekaterina Goncharova, joint marketing/psychology program (thesis committee)

Feiyi Wang, joint marketing/psychology program (thesis committee)

Jean-Louis Sterckx, KU Leuven (supervisory committee)