

Anchor firm disrupted: Creating a digital opportunity?

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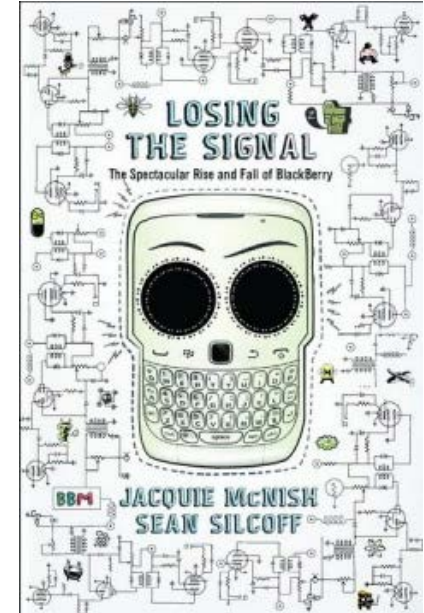
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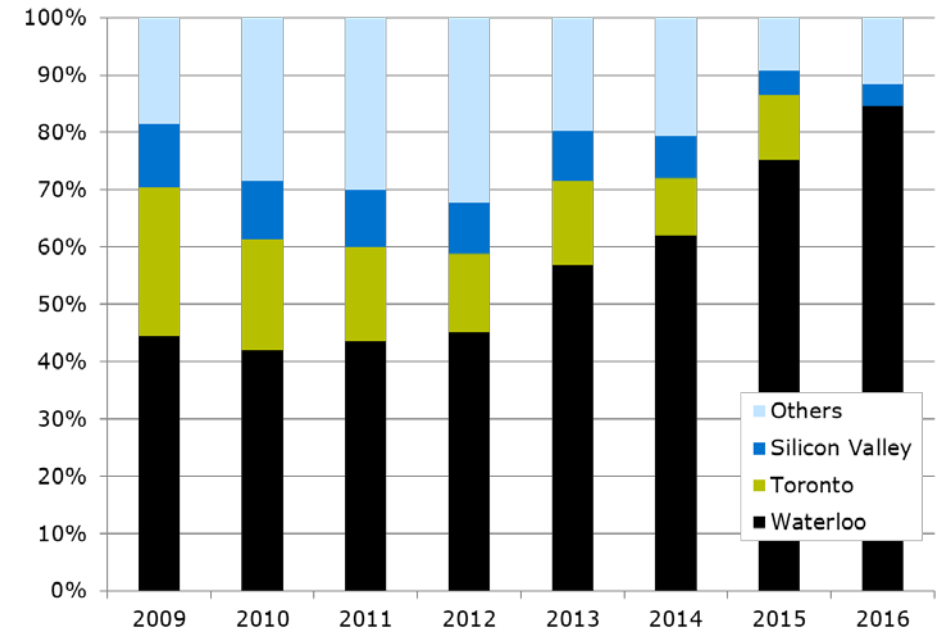
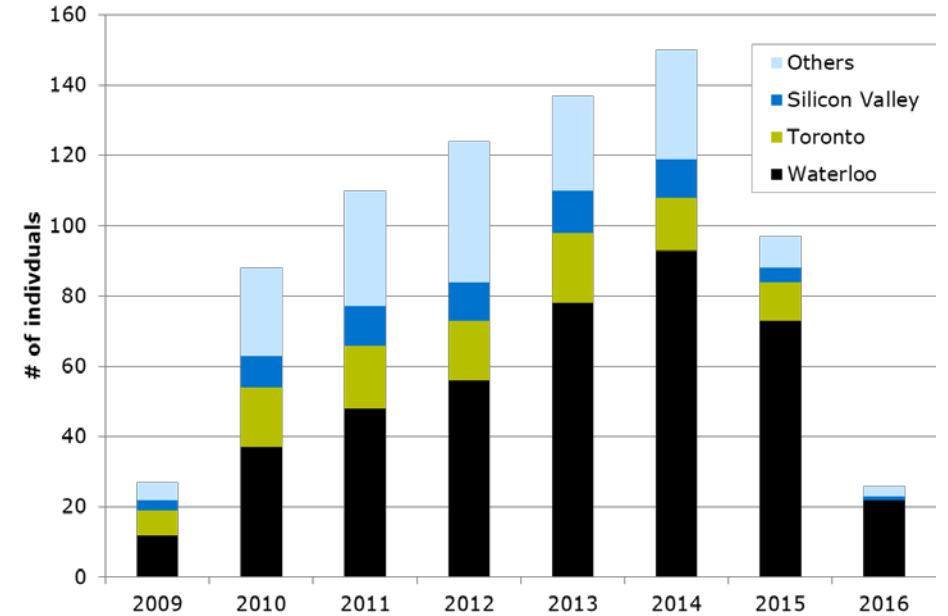
KEY QUESTIONS

- **What happens when a cluster's anchor firm is disrupted?**
 - Mobility of talent?
 - New firm formation and entrepreneurship?
- **Is there an opportunity to exploit digital career platform data?**
 - Unique data set: Individuals employed at BlackBerry in Waterloo who left post-2008 (n=759)
 - Key variables: Entrepreneurs (based on job titles), Employers, Locations, Working in the local start-up ecosystem (Firm listed in Crunchbase)
 - Coded using combination of machine learning and manual processes



MAJOR FINDING #1: DID THEY STAY OR DID THEY GO?

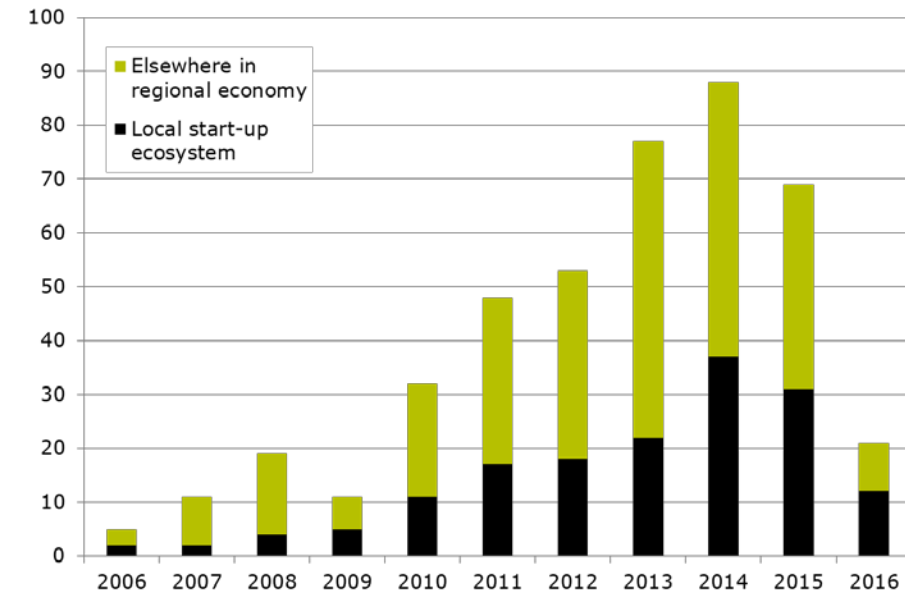
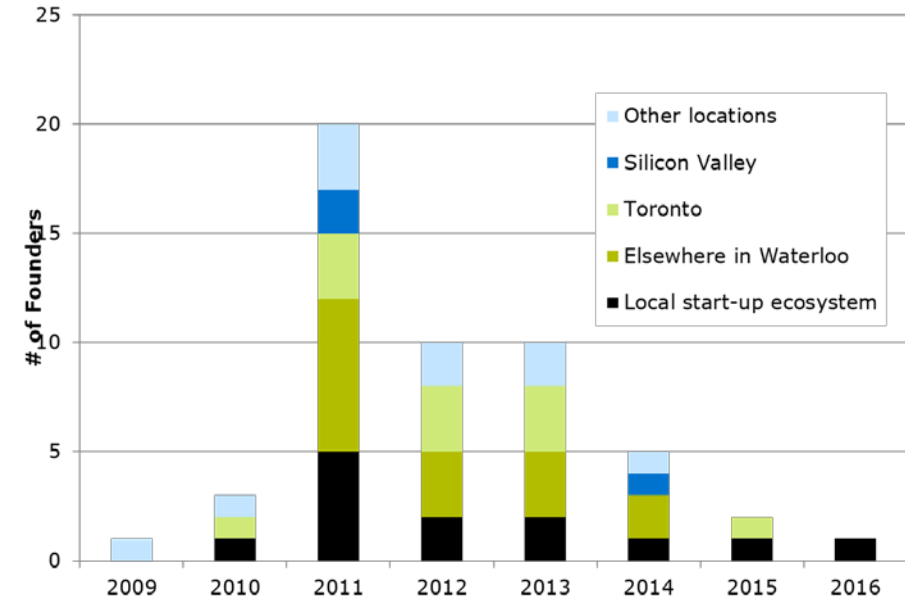
- They stayed ... mostly.
- More talent remaining in the region over time
 - 55.2% work in Waterloo region, with another 13.8% in nearby Toronto
 - 8.2% went to Silicon Valley



MAJOR FINDING #2

DID THEY START NEW FIRMS?

- Not really.
- Some local firm formation, but firms no longer exist.
 - Very small proportion started a firm (6.9%), increasing proportion (but fewer) founded locally over time
- **But**, an important resource for the local start-up ecosystem
 - 25.4% work for start-ups, increasing proportion over time



UNDERSTANDING CANADA'S DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY?

- Local institutions / associative actors (such as Communtech) play a critical role in the urban/regional economy:
 - Retain digital talent
 - Support new venture creation
 - Match talent to start-up (or scale-up) firms
- Challenges related to digital data sources (accessible, available, affordable) to better understand Canada's digital opportunities



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Build and support local institutions that enhance the capacity of the entrepreneurial ecosystem to absorb talent**

- **Critical need for high quality, systematic, detailed data at the city and regional level**



THANK YOU!

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