

## Measuring Output in the Computer Industry

The measurement of performance in an industry is not always straightforward. For many industries, there are a variety of government surveys and private-sector sources that offer information about outcomes, but these measures do not always yield similar results. Sometimes, it is easy to identify factors that can account for the discrepancies (e.g. different time periods or samples). Often, however, researchers need to look to the micro data to understand the source of cross-survey differences.

This paper uses micro-level sources to help explain differences in aggregate outcomes for the computer industry. Specifically, we will compare micro data from several years of the Annual Survey of Manufactures; the Current Industrial Reports; the Manufactures' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders Survey; and from the private research firm, Gartner, Inc. Close examination at the plant and firm level will shed light on why these different sources yield sometimes divergent pictures of the industry.