Track 2: Advancing Theories and Theorizing in IS Research

Track Chairs

Shirley Gregor
Australian National University, Australia

Dorothy E. Leidner
Baylor University, Texas, USA

Benjamin Mueller*
University of Mannheim, Germany

Nils Urbach
University of Bayreuth, Germany

*Corresponding track chair: mueller@es.uni-mannheim.de

Description

While IS research placed an emphasis on methodological advances in the past decade, the issue of theory, theorizing, and theoretical contributions of IS research reemerged only recently through contributions of various senior scholars. Although the attention to theoretical work has been at the heart of our discipline for a while, there has been little agreement as to what constitutes valid theory, theorizing, or theoretical contributions. Even more so, the increasing permeation of our daily lives with IS and the recognition that IS have the potential to contribute to solving some of the greater societal challenges pose a significant challenges to our theorizing.

Even though IS scholars have produced a number or theoretical contributions, we believe that advanced theorizing on digital work and life calls for a dedicated discussion on the evolution of existing methodological and conceptual approaches to theorizing and a careful development of new theories. Our track seeks to fill this void and provide a place to share research that debates the nature and meaning of theory in IS. Moreover, some of our reference disciplines have recently turned towards reviving their examination of theories and theorizing. It is this rekindled interest that leads us to suggest that the IS discipline, too, should further intensify its discussion on the matter.

This track provides a platform for the discussion and development of new approaches to theorizing and new methods to inform this theorizing. We also want to engage in a differentiated discussion on the nature and role of our theorizing in light of the increasing digitization of work and life. In this, we seek submissions that are innovative, novel, and significant in terms of advancing our discipline’s ability to theorize phenomena of digital work and life. We place particular emphasis on a submission’s ability to highlight how it helps us as a discipline to better describe, explain, predict, and design these phenomena. In methodological contributions, we thus
encourage potential authors to elaborate on how and why the phenomena we study can now be captured better. In theoretical pieces, we will look not only for novel ideas, but also for a careful integration with what is known already and how and why the new contribution advances existing nomological nets.

**Topics of Interest**

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Conceptual advances in theories for IS research
- New theories on phenomena of digital work and life
- Significant advances of existing theories (e.g., innovative or substantially improved construct conceptualizations or meaningful extensions through additional constructs)
- Integration / synthesis of existing theories
- Detailed application of existing theories to inform design and action
- Reflections on theories-in-practice and what we can learn from their application

- Methodological advances in theorizing about IS phenomena
- New or advanced methods for data collection with an emphasis on what kind of data they contribute beyond conventional methods as well as a discussion of how and why this advances our theorizing
- New or refined methods of data analysis (theorizing or theory building) with an emphasis on a comparison to established approaches and a discussion of how and why they advance our theorizing
- Strategies for inductive theorizing and the building of substantive theories grounded in an IS context
- A constructive critique of existing methods and an identification of impacts on and limits to current theorizing

- The nature and role of theoretical contributions of IS research
- An analysis of the current state-of-the-art of the discipline’s theorizing
- Reflections on what can be learned from reference disciplines
- Frameworks and typologies for theories and theoretical work in IS

**Sponsorship**

Our track collaborates closely with the European Journal of information Systems (EJIS). Based on the reviews and editorial recommendations, the authors of the best papers submitted to the track will be invited to participate in the EJIS paper development workshop immediately after the ECIS conference. There, authors will have the opportunity to further develop their papers for consideration as part of a planned EJIS special issue building upon the track.

**Associate Editors**