Creativity in Information Systems

Introduction

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As the innovation rates in most markets increase, an organization’s ability to sustain creativity in its products, processes and members becomes a significant competitive challenge. Often an organization is considered only to be as valuable as its last great idea. Recognizing that information technology (IT) has the capacity to enable innovative processes and products, many organizations are now looking for IT to directly support their creativity needs. Accordingly, the Creativity in Information Systems (CIS) Minitrack is interested in exploring a wide variety of topics involving when and how creativity can be sustained or enhanced by IT.

Because creative people produce creative systems, one area of interest for the CIS Minitrack involves exploring ways to support creativity within the IT function. Not only must IT personnel find creative ways to enhance system acceptance, productivity and satisfaction, but they also are increasingly being expected to develop systems that can enhance the creativity of end users. Awareness and understanding of which tools and techniques best support creativity can help designers and developers create better applications.

Another focus for the CIS Minitrack involves examining ways organizational processes have been re-conceptualized using information and communications technology. A consideration of the issues and challenges involved in recognizing the need for process change as well as determining exactly how communications and information technology applications might allow for new processes supports organizational efforts to perform effectively these dynamic times.

Because of the variety of topics covered in this year’s submissions, we are expecting very lively and interesting discussion. The session begins with a paper by Christopher Barlow from the Illinois Institute of Technology that explores how the approach taken to frame a problem often limits one’s awareness of potential solutions. Dr. Barlow develops a model that re-frames the definition of a creative event from “a newer and better idea” to “a shift in perspective that makes new possibilities obvious”. He explores the research benefits that are likely to accrue from this shift and offers a preliminary assessment of its usefulness. The second paper, by Drs. Christopher Landauer and Kirstie Bellman from the Aerospace Corporation, discusses some of the challenges faced in developing systems to support human creativity. They describe a system infrastructure they have developed called “wrapping” that can provide the richness and flexibility required for human support. The third paper, by Dr. Sherry M. B. Thatcher from the University of Arizona, explores the concept of “identity fit” and its impact on creative performance. She uses the results of a field study to demonstrate how identity fit has a positive effect on creative performance. The fourth paper, by Drs. Keith S. Horton and Rick G. Dewar from Napier University, considers the use of patterns in relation to information systems strategy formulation and applies the concept Alexandrian patterns to an empirical case study to demonstrate the value of reflection and context.