Introduction to the HICSS-48 Minitrack on Practice-based IS Research

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The debate over rigor and relevance has extended many decades with rigor leading the way in the overwhelming majority of our academic journals where theory contribution and methodological excellence transcend any practical implication the research may have. Practice-based research aspires to bridge the gap between academic theory and practice; it aspires both to introduce researchers to state of the art practices and issues from industry as well as introduce managers to research that makes sense of and brings coherence to the issues they face. The methods used in practice-based research are often exploratory, field-based studies involving interviews, observations, and/or descriptive surveys. The intense pressure to achieve methodological distinction and theoretical contribution often results in very current practice-based topics being eschewed by researchers, because the topics themselves are not mature enough in practice to achieve desirable samples or sample sizes, nor are they conducive to theorizing since so little is known. These are precisely the reasons that exploratory, practice-based research can play a tremendous role in helping establish and lay the foundations of a research domain while providing insights into an emerging topic.

The first presentation, “Late to the game: assessing IT integration risk after the acquisition target has been identified” by Stefan Henningsson of Copenhagen Business School and William Kettinger of the University of Memphis, introduces a framework for assessing IT integration risk in acquisitions. The authors illustrate the framework’s merits in the management of high-risk acquisitions and the identification of low-risk acquisitions through a case study of Trelleborg AB, a global industrial company. The authors provide lessons for CIOs in assessing and managing IT-related risk in acquisitions after the acquisition target has been identified.

The second presentation is of a paper titled “Examining the role of business intelligence in non-profit organizations to support strategic social goals,” by Richelle Oakley of Savannah State University and Lakshmi Iyer and A.F. Salam of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The authors use a case study of a United Way affiliate to highlight how non-profits utilize information systems (IS) to support their strategic social goals. The authors show how the United Way affiliate derived value from the organization's utilization of an integrated data system which provided visual and spatial map analyses and traditional analytical reports. The authors investigate the relationship between BI-facilitated intellectual capital and its resultant impact on the non-profit’s social goal.

The third presentation, “Managing governance, risk and compliance for post-crisis regulatory change” by Daniel Gozman of Henley Business School in Reading Berkshire and Wendy Currie of Audencia Nantes, draws from a longitudinal study conducted with nine financial institutions over a twelve year period to identify nine IS capabilities that underpin activities for managing regulatory themed governance, risk and compliance efforts. The authors show that many firms are so focused on meeting the Regulators’ deadlines that they neglect to develop a strategic, enterprise-wide connected approach to compliance. As a result, executives risk implementing siloed compliance solutions within business functions.

The fourth presentation, “Researching dynamic phenomena in complex organizations” by Jordan Eschler and Hazel Taylor of the University of Washington and Shrikant Palkar of Costco Wholesale Corporation, presents a research strategy for collaboration with practitioners to execute valid and reliable research in the field while providing valuable, theory-based insight to practitioners who sponsor the research. The authors demonstrate their approach with a case study of a Fortune 30 company undertaking an extensive organizational change initiative. The authors describe their method for framing ‘real world’ research in a way that maximizes the benefit to researchers and practitioners.