For nine years, we have organized the Service Science minitrack at HICSS to bring together researchers and practitioners working in the field of service science, the interdisciplinary study of service that combines perspectives from fields of science, management, engineering, and design to innovate service systems. With strong support by leading IT companies, such as IBM, service science has already had a global impact, with hundreds of universities worldwide offering courses, programs, or degrees related to service science, and with dozens of academic research institutes and groups appearing. This minitrack has been a platform for researchers and practitioners from around the world to share work and exchange ideas, and continues to be a major forum for sharing research results and further developing this emerging discipline.

The trend of increasing contributions to economic outputs from services-related activities in major countries pushes the focus on service innovation to be a major part of most business models. Even in traditionally manufacturing-driven industries, such as IT and related industries, the importance of service has surpassed most other corporate competencies. From the outset, efforts in creating, composing, and delivering services call for systematic studies of managerial, technical, and social issues. Combining managerial, organizational, and technical perspectives, service science research and education aims to create service professionals with technological, business, and social-organizational abilities.

Service science deals with the design, implementation, and management of “service systems,” integrated, value-creating configurations of service providers, clients, partners, and others. The best-performing service systems are IT-enabled, customer-centered, relationship-focused, and knowledge-intensive—yet span multiple formal and informal organizations. Because of the multidisciplinary context, researchers and practitioners in management, social sciences, and computer sciences are all working to increase service innovation. Multiple perspectives can be unified using the theoretical construct of the service system, in which entities (people, businesses, government agencies, etc.) interact to co-create value via value propositions that describe dynamic configurations of resources. In fact, over the last few years, this framework of value creation in complex service systems, which requires elaborating various stakeholder perspectives and understanding the broad context of use for specific cases to enable effective value creation, especially given advanced and autonomous technology, has emerged as the central unifying framework across many papers and presentations.

This year, the minitrack focuses on papers that connect rigorous disciplinary research with the emerging interdisciplinary framework of value creation in service systems, focusing particularly on service design, innovation, and technology. There are papers from a variety of disciplines and a variety of communities addressing service policies, service process modeling, service delivery management, innovative service technologies, and the role of the Internet, the digital economy, and information technology. Papers come from areas such as service design, service innovation, service engineering, and technology-enabled service systems.