The debates on materiality and sociomateriality, hailing from science studies and organization studies, allow information systems (IS) researchers to evade received distinctions between the social, natural and technical. The literatures that inform this Minitrack contest a purely information-based perspective that posit abstract meanings and immaterial data divorced from situated contexts. Instead the bodies of work that inspire this Minitrack draw on new materialist, pragmatist, and practice-oriented perspectives (amongst others) hailing primarily from the social sciences that analyze the social activities going into the manufacturing of documents through the manipulations of various material forms.

The notion of the document serves as a lens into the practical and material nature of what organizational members do day in and day out. Documents are sociomaterial in that they are artifacts—and thus embody the technical infrastructure—and social—as they embody both the work practices and shared orientations of those involved.

For example, our production and distribution of this mini-track introduction involved the technology of word processors, several different computers, cloud services, hard copies, email messages and PDF files. Your reading of this document likely involves numerous other technologies; you may be reading a paper version of this introduction, part of the conference packet, or you might have stumbled over it among many other mini-track introductions on the HICSS-48 website; each case, again, depends on a set of web clients, computers, and cloud servers amid a web of social practices.

Shared social practices are reflected in the degree to which you, the reader, and we, the authors, understand and share common knowledge about the form and contents of the genre of conference calls in general and HICSS calls in particular. Our shared activities are the basics of work practice. And, the heterogeneous material forms of this call for proposals are some of the infrastructures supporting HICSS and the broader information systems field. In short, the production of this call involves both the work of documenting and document work.

As increasingly complex information systems are adopted and adapted within and across organizational environments, there is pressing need for more careful study of document work and the work of documenting within such contexts. Two innovative papers address this topic in this year’s Minitrack.

First, Jaime Snyder, Katie Shilton, and Sara Anderson explore how researchers materialize values in IS research. Based on a systematic literature review, they find that IS researchers perceive the values of research subjects in their language, attitudes, design, and practices. They also materialize values at different temporal points in the research process.

Second, Silke Weißenfels, Katharina Ebner, Sven Dittes and Stefan Smolnik ask how the IS artifact matters in sociomateriality research. Based on a critical reading of the IS literature on sociomateriality they compare the varying dominance of social and material agencies in empirical IS studies. Their research suggests that greater attention should be paid to the dynamic interplay between agency and materiality.

Third, based on fieldwork in Southern Afghanistan Tjitske Holtrop studies the writing of an evaluation report of the Dutch military intervention mission in the province of Uruzgan. Instead of focusing on the representative qualities of a text, Holtrop follows the production of the evaluation report, and in particular the role of writing in regard to infrastructures, format and authorship.

The papers represent an emerging literature converging old and new approaches to sociomateriality and documenting practices. Building on work presented in prior HICSS tracks, this scholarship reignites a body of work on the genre of digital documents that has found a home in the Digital Media track since the mid-90s. Through its continued development, we find new practical and analytic relevance for study of information systems in the years ahead.