

Forthcoming Special Issue
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Special Issue on
“Information Systems in Interorganizational Networks”

Companies are increasingly organizing themselves as part of dynamic digital networks. Such digital networks can replace the physical distribution networks (as is increasingly the case in the music industry). These digital networks can also support or complement the physical distribution networks (e.g. Li & Fung). Organizations such as e-Bay and Amazon use digital networks to operate a platform to link of buyers and sellers. Digital technologies are crucial in each of these examples and enable organizations to create value through the novel use of information systems: New networks emerge connecting customers with suppliers, suppliers with suppliers and customers with customers in innovative ways. This trend, in combination with the phenomenal reduction of interaction costs and the development of communication and information standards that facilitate inter-organizational information systems and the development of quick-connect capabilities leads to an increased use of interfirm digital networks. Companies will increasingly be able to pick, plug and play the appropriate network partner facilitated by the easy and fast activation and deactivation of interorganizational information systems. “Smartness” emerges when firms embed business rules within their primary business processes and use information gathering, synthesis and analysis capabilities to run these digitally enabled interfirm networks.

These digital interfirm networks have a significant impact on the organization of the firm, on how the firm serves its customer and on how a firm can stay ahead of its competitors. The design of the network, the governance rules that facilitate cooperation, and the information systems of these business networks, rather than the individual organization, will increasingly determine the competitiveness and ultimately the performance of the individual firm.

The purpose and scope of this special issue is to develop and publish a collection of papers representing the most recent research on the creation and management of these digital networks; and their impact on firm performance. In particular, we are looking into the role of interorganizational information systems and how these IS systems impact the structure of a firm’s network, how it serves its customers and interacts with its suppliers.

The special issue will encourage research that uses empirical, analytical, or case study approaches and either strives to generate insightful theoretical principles, provide validation of existing theories in the context of management of digital business networks, or compare and contrast the management of digital business networks with other IS-enabled forms of governance such as e-auctions. Research from diverse academic disciplines such as information systems, computer science, operations management, social network analysis, strategic management, and other related areas are welcome for this special issue. We seek original manuscripts that are previously unpublished and that present an interdisciplinary approach in solving problems related to the theme.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Enablers:**
 - How are IS technologies enabling the design, execution and coordination of digital business networks?
 - How are business processes shared, executed, and coordinated between network partners?
 - How are business processes converted to digital business processes that can be deployed in interfirm networks?
 - How do IS technologies facilitate the monitoring of the execution of these digital business processes using network performance dashboards?
- **Design:**
 - How do firms organize the governance of digital business networks?
 - How are interfirm business processes designed, executed, and coordinated?
 - Is a network orchestrator an essential part of a digital business network or is it possible to have digital business networks without such orchestrators?
 - How do these network orchestrators use interorganizational information systems to manage the production of goods and services?
 - What is the role of communication standards in creating digital interfirm networks?
- **Performance:**
 - How do firms measure the performance of their digital business networks?
 - How do digital business networks create value?
 - How is joint value determined and distributed among the network participants?

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