Call for Papers

European Journal of Information Systems

Special Issue on
Alternative Genres

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The construction of meaning is tightly related to genres of communication. A haiku is a Japanese poem or verse form consisting of 17 syllables divided into three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively. Although the restrictive structure and compressed form of this poetic genre have enabled rich modes of expression, they have also limited the tone, complexity, and rhetorical impact of haikus.

Similarly, albeit with greater degrees of freedom, a scholarly article in a peer-reviewed journal is expected to conform to a more or less defined genre, to adhere to a recognizable structure and to fulfill content expectations. Subsequently, at least in part, the scholarly genre severely influences what the article can say and how it can say it. In other words, the journal paper genre shapes an article’s tone and content, the complexity of its argument, and its potential impact.

However, in the case of scientific articles, the effect of the adopted writing genre goes beyond the mere communication of research results because genres also shape how researchers frame and investigate the phenomenon of interest and how they interpret empirical data. In other words, the journal paper genre plays a significant enabling and constraining role in the production of scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, most IS researchers adopt – and most reviewers and journal editors enforce – the journal paper genre without question.

This EJIS special issue on *Alternative Genres* seeks to highlight the role of genres on the production of knowledge in IS. It provides authors with an opportunity to experiment with new, unconventional and under-represented modes of presentation. We invite authors to leverage alternative genres for presenting their research in an effort to develop and demonstrate new insights and perspectives on subject matters of interest to the field of IS.

The term *Alternative Genres* refers to new or unconventional forms of communicating scholarship and practice. It relates to innovation with respect to semantic framing (Bateson, 1972; Weick, 1979), literary or representational styles (Jermier, 1985; Schultze, 2000; Mathiassen *et al*., 2012) -- including drama (Avital & Vandenbosch, 2000), monologue (Kautz & Jensen, 2012) and narrative (Boland & Schultze, 1996) -- and media of expression (Tufte, 1983.) Overall, the application of alternative genres is a generative act of reframing that provides us, the IS community, with an opportunity to take a fresh look at, to generate new insights on, and to gain deeper understanding of phenomena of interest. As unconventional forms of thinking, doing and communicating research, alternative genres thus reflect new modalities of inquiry that serve as a source of inspiration, innovation and insight generation. As such, they have the potential to reshape how we constitute the world.
Aiming to escape the “tyranny” of the prevailing genres, we envisage alternative genres as an opportunity to rejuvenate IS research and to expand its boundaries (Rowe, 2012). We adopt a broad view of alternative genres for this special issue and invite papers that apply any unconventional representational modality that expands or challenges the prevailing modus operandi of communicating IS scholarship and practice. Both theoretical essays and empirical studies are welcome. We particularly encourage submissions that challenge or reframe our taken-for-granted assumptions, perceptions, and practices related to representing IS research.

Submissions may address the following topic areas, but need not be limited to them:

- Applications of Alternative Genres in IS Research
  - Illustrations of visual and other media instead of, or in addition to, text to convey research results
  - Application of drama, fiction, parody, satire, and other literary forms to convey IS scholarship
  - Translation of alternative representational genres from other disciplines to IS research
  - Mixing of representational styles (e.g., variables-centered and narrative) in multimodal research as proposed by Ramiller & Pentland (2009)
  - Multiple re-telling of the same empirical events using different genres

- Opportunities and Challenges associated with Alternative Genres
  - The generative capacity and value of alternative genres
  - Alternative genres as driver for epistemological and ontological boundary spanning
  - The implications of alternative genres for the IS discipline
  - Surprises and serendipitous outcomes of applying alternative genres

- Conventional Genres in IS Research: Tyranny or Rosetta Stone?
  - Strengths and weaknesses of extant genres in IS
  - The relationship between particular research methods and genres
  - The potential of narrative as an alternative genre in IS research

**Format and Layout**

EJIS is published on paper and online. It is designed to support mainly text but also figures, images, and to some degree video. Please consider the structural affordances of the media when developing your submission.

Developing a submission for the special issue may present a challenge if the alternative genre is not conveyed primarily in a textual-based or if it is a radical change from the prevailing genres. In these cases, we recommend considering a three-part "frame narrative" structure as follows: (1) Introduction: outlining the motivation for and underlying rationale of the particular genre. This would involve consideration of the genre itself, how it applies, and the key principles of practicing it; (2) Main Body: presenting an exemplary implementation of the genre on some IS-related subject matter; (3) Reflection: discussing the lessons from implementing the genre and comparing and contrasting it to other alternatives.

**Submission Guidelines and Important Dates**

- Papers may be submitted to the special issue any time before **February 16, 2014** and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.
- Papers should cover topics within the scope of EJIS as well as highlight the role of genres in IS. Computer science and engineering-oriented submissions will be declined.
Prospective authors interested in developing works for the special issue are strongly encouraged to contact the editors ahead of time.

Authors of high potential submissions to the special issue will be invited to a paper development workshop that will be held in conjunction with ECIS 2014.

EJIS sponsors the Alternative Genres track in ECIS 2014. Authors of selected papers in the Alternative Genres track in ECIS 2014 will be invited to the paper development workshop and subsequently may be invited to submit their paper to the special issue.

Submit using the EJIS online paper submission system (Select the Alternative Genres Special Issue) at http://ejis.msubmit.net/cgi-bin/main.plex

Follow the EJIS formatting guidelines at http://ejis.msubmit.net/cgi-bin/main.plex?form_type=display_auth_instructions (Note that papers should be no longer than 8000 words and should not contain any foot- or endnotes.)

**Illustrative References**


WEICK, K.E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing*. Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.