

Service Innovation in the Digital Age

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Submission Deadline: January 5, 2011 **DEADLINE EXTENDED TO FEBRUARY 15, 2011**

Motivation and Overview

Transformations to and within the economy are happening on a global scale in consumer as well as business-to-business activities, in commercial, not-for-profit, and governmental sectors, and in developed as well as emerging economies (Bryson et al. 2004). These changes are enabled by—and often dependent on—information technologies. We have witnessed dramatic innovation in business models, collaborations, and work practices in service provision, but also challenges to social and market institutions at all levels—societal, industry, profession, organizational, group, and individual (Barrett and Davidson 2008). This special issue encompasses a broad view of service to focus on how the exploitation of IT capabilities influences how we experience and innovate with service. The intent is to explore theoretically and empirically what “service” means in today’s technologically infused and global economy and to challenge traditional notions about service innovation, management, and design.

Contemporary Research Questions

Recent developments in the literature, particularly from the marketing and operations disciplines, have highlighted the need for service to be better theorized (Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2008). Traditional views of services are being challenged, particularly the differentiation between products and services. Gustafsson and Johnson (2003) suggest that “physical products are services waiting to happen.” So-called “servitization” recognizes that products have a higher service component than in previous decades; this is increasingly evident in developments such as software-as-a-service (Spohrer and Riecken 2006). Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008) extend this boundary-spanning conceptualization between products and services by claiming that all exchanges essentially are service-for-service exchanges in which goods are seen as service-delivery mechanisms and the customer and supplier co-create value. Such a conceptualization places information at the core of value creation.

There has been relatively little work in the IS discipline that has contributed to this growing debate. This is surprising since IT not only plays a significant role in service design and delivery but can also call into question previous conceptualizations of service and suggest new ones (Barrett and Davidson 2008). Notably, extensive use of IT in services and service automation can contribute to increased efficiencies in service delivery, service effectiveness, and globalization. An interesting development in the globalization of service is the important role that emerging economies are playing in service innovation. The nature of service activities nonetheless involves negotiated and often co-generated exchange between a provider and a supplier or customer in the provision of largely intangible assets, as well as collective coordination and integration of knowledge in service delivery. We need to better understand the ways in which new business models and their associated challenges are institutionally distinctive across professions and across a range of sectors globally. We particularly need to understand how the value proposition and the accompanying value realization process need to be managed for service offered across market segments. Finally, we need to better understand the key implications for organizations, their employees, and IT professionals in the 21st century service economy.

Possible topics for this special issue include, but are not limited to the following:

- The IT role in service innovation and value (co)creation
- Knowledge and innovation in IT-enabled service design and development
- Multi-level analyses of IT-related change in the service provision

- Market-specific or market-spanning transformations in the service provision, enabled by IT
- IT as a facilitator of market creation and marketing practices
- Facilitating service experience through digitally enabled processes and practices
- Redefinition of expertise and boundary roles in service provision work
- Facilitating customer and business partner relationships in online communities
- Globalization of expertise in service exchange
- Service innovation in emerging markets
- Differences in business models for high-end developed markets versus mass, emerging markets
- Service-oriented transformation and implications for (re)skilling in professional/occupational groups
- Open and social innovation within firms and with customers/suppliers to enhance service offerings
- Redefining customer service through IT and self-service
- Evolution of IT products into services, or “servitization”
- Supply chain webs and digitally enabled business processes
- Transformation of IT vendors into service providers; implications for IT professions
- Theoretic and analytic approaches for investigating service-orientation transformation
- Requirements analysis frameworks for service design and delivery
- Service-based transformations of the role of IT in marketing

Deadlines and Submission Instructions

- Submissions due: January 5, 2011
- First round decisions: May 2011
- Second round revisions due: September 2011
- Second round decisions: December 2011
- Final round revisions due: April 2012

All submissions must adhere to the formatting guidelines for *MIS Quarterly*. Submissions are made electronically to <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/misq>.

All submissions will be screened by the Guest Editors for fit the theme of the Special Issue and prospects to successfully negotiate the review process.

- (1) Successful papers will be assigned to an Associate Editor on the Special Issue Editorial Board for full review.
- (2) A publication decision on the paper will be made after no more than two full review cycles.

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