

# MISQ Archivist

## Digital First: The Ontological Reversal and New Challenges for Information Systems Research

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### Abstract

The classical view of an information system is that it represents and reflects physical reality. We suggest this classical view is increasingly obsolete: digital technologies are now creating and shaping physical reality. We call this phenomenon the ontological reversal. The ontological reversal is where the digital version is created first, and the physical version second (if needed). This ontological reversal challenges us to think about the role of humans and technology in society. It also challenges us to think about our role as IS scholars in this digital world and what it means for our research agendas.

**Keywords:** Digital, digital ecosystems, ontology, ontological reversal, human experience, human values