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ISJ Editorial: Quirks, Neologisms, Provocations and the Mundane: Titles and Interpretations

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As editor, I get to read a lot of titles, the vast majority of which, alas, we don't end up publishing. In this editorial, I'd like to reflect briefly on the nature of titles and their effectiveness in conveying a quick message to a potential reader.

Throughout the course of my career, I cannot ever recall seeing any advice about how to create a title for a research paper. Titles in general are meaningful and give some clues as to the content of the article that follows. Sometimes we see a title that really catches the eye, that inspires, or even that disgusts, depending on our individual taste. Here is an example of a title of a paper that, regrettably, we did not publish: "Rat Swarm Pelican Based Deep Learning And Sequence Mining For Web Page Recommendation". How do you feel about that? The first three words alone may suffice to turn you on or off. Why the authors thought that the article might be suitable for the ISJ is another matter, but the title alone has a certain unique quality that might seduce or repel you. Thus, just as the creation of a title is a subjective process, so too is the interpretation of a title. But there are some aspects of a title that are worth examining a little more carefully. For instance, we can look at length, depth, comprehensibility, suitability and so forth. In the paragraphs below, I offer some recent ISJ titles and my own analysis. My purpose is to alert readers to the potential for value in a title, and to gently suggest that the creation of a title is itself an art that is worth examining and practicing carefully.

At one extreme, I've seen titles that are almost as long as the abstract. These often tend to mundane description rather than creative quirkiness. The longer titles often have two parts, separated by a dash or colon. It seems that the authors want to cram into the title as many parts of the study as possible, including in some cases a list of all the moderating and mediating variables. This is probably effective both in conveying the substance of a paper to potential readers, and in lengthening one's cv by a line or two. But is it really necessary? Could one devise a more frugal title that is nevertheless attractive to potential readers? The longest I can see at the ISJ in recent years is Kranz et al.'s (2016) "Understanding the influence of absorptive capacity and ambidexterity on the process of business model change: The case of on-premise and cloud computing software". It's quite comprehensive and certainly provides very clear information to the reader on what to expect in the article. In contrast, the shortest title at the ISJ (excluding editorials) is Clarke's (2016) "Big Data, Big Risks". Not only is this short and pithy, but it is also quite provocative and controversial. It may be disliked by those who are enamoured of big data for instance. It seems to embed the personal stance of the researcher. As a title, I think it is quite attractive and it certainly conveys the essence of the article itself.

Sometimes, a title has a quirky flavour to it that borders on the catachrestical, i.e. it uses a turn of phrase or a combination of words that seems somehow out of place. It may invite a new interpretation. For instance, Gerlach et al.'s (2019) "Flamingos on a Slackline: Companies' Challenges of Balancing the Competing Demands of Handling Customer Information and Privacy". Why Flamingos? It's a puzzle that is only resolved in the very last sentence of the conclusion (*ibid.*, p.567), where the authors write: "As they are standing on 'wobbling slacklines', companies have to become flamingos and learn to maintain a balanced stance without falling over". Will the metaphor of the organisation as a flamingo take off? The limited evidence available so far suggests that it has not yet happened: this article is the only one in the entire Wiley Online Library where the word 'flamingo' appears in the title. In the AIS eLibrary, the word 'flamingo' appears eleven times (counted in late April, 2023) but all of these items either reference this same article or a book published by Flamingo Press.

Sometimes titles introduce neologisms, e.g. De Moya and Pallud's (2020) "From Panopticon to Heautopticon: A New Form of Surveillance Introduced by Quantified-Self Practices" or

juxtapose words in novel combinations, e.g. Tamm et al.'s (2022) "Creative Analytics: Towards Data-Inspired Creative Decisions". They may also present a playful counterpoint of ideas, e.g. Melville and Robert's (2023) "Putting Humans Back in the Loop: An Affordance Conceptualization of the 4th Industrial Revolution".

Personally, I think that catachreses, neologisms, and other innovative elements of language are generally effective components of a title, so long as they are neither taken to an extreme nor deliberately intended to confuse the reader in the context of the research; as editor I appreciate this kind of novelty. Thus, titles are entities that offer creative potential. As I note above, a title that embodies a metaphor may challenge contemporary knowledge patterns with catachrestical imagination. While reviewers do occasionally take issue with a title, they are often below the bar of critical appraisal and so authors should feel the freedom to be creative when crafting a title: flex your imagination a little, craft a vivacious or quirky turn-of-phrase, shun the mundane and reveal a novel perspective that can attract the attention of your readers.

I won't belabour the point, but I deliberately craft the titles of editorials in a similar manner: quirkiness attracts! For instance, 'Appreciating Alien Thinking', 'The Art of Vivacious Variance', 'The Limitations of Limitations' and the title of the editorial of the previous issue of this journal, which started off with 'Pickled Eggs'. Indeed, most editorials have pithy titles that punctuate myths and misconceptions, or that offer a quirky combination of ideas. I hope that this issue's title is no different.

In this last issue of 2023, we present six articles and two additional editorials.

In the first article, Weiss et al. (2023) illustrate how BMW, a German manufacturer of high-end cars, designed platform boundary resources to facilitate the development of apps for its onboard infotainment system. Using an action research approach, the authors provide detailed insights into how BMW involved app developers, referred to as lead complementors, in the design process of boundary resources. Over the course of three multi-year episodes, the authors report on the design improvements of boundary resources such as standardised platform interfaces, development tools, and platform governance processes. By introducing the notion of lead complementor involvement, the authors transfer the well-known concept of lead users to the context of digital platforms. They offer four propositions that help us to understand and implement lead complementor involvement as an interactive process for improving the design of platform boundary resources.

In the second article, Yang et al. (2023) explore how weak and strong signals affect venture capital funding acquired by digital startups in various industries in China. Drawing on signaling theory and institutional legitimacy theory, the authors suggest that application downloads function as a novel strong signal that can reduce market legitimacy concerns, and previous-round venture capitalist reputation as a traditional strong signal that mitigates regulatory legitimacy concerns. Further, they articulate the interaction mechanism of these strong and weak signals by demonstrating their complementary or substitutive effects in alleviating information asymmetry on startup quality, which provides implications for digital startups to secure venture capital financing. Theoretically, the authors explicitly examine the simultaneous influence of multiple signals of different strengths on venture capital funding. They also reveal the contextual mechanism of signals in the emerging economy with weak institutional power and high uncertainty.

In the third article, Tim et al. (2023) advance our understanding of digital resilience, specifically the capacity of individuals to recover from exogenous shocks, through the effective design of IS solutions. The authors present an Action Design Research (ADR) project

conducted during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, where they successfully developed a telemonitoring system. This system has been instrumental in supporting over 115 frontline healthcare workers in monitoring the symptoms of more than 1,000 patients. Based on the ADR project, the article proposes an ADAPT framework informing effective design of IS solutions for resilience against exogenous shocks. The framework contributes new design process knowledge for a crisis-driven IS design process characterised by urgency, limited resources, and diverse stakeholder participation. By offering new insights and practical recommendations, the authors aim to equip design teams with the knowledge required to contribute to crisis-driven design endeavours that tackle the pressing and urgent challenges of our time.

In the fourth article, Marabelli et al. (2023) explore the challenges and opportunities associated with hybrid conferences. The authors draw on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, when most conferences worldwide were held first online and then in hybrid mode, and consider the extent to which remote access increased inclusion. The authors argue that academic organizations such as the Association for Information Systems (AIS) should examine ways to continue the practice of allowing remote access to major conferences such as ICIS, AMCIS, ECIS, and PACIS. At the same time, the authors acknowledge several issues concerning hybrid conferences, such as: the need for costly technologies and expensive venues, for whoever attends in person; the complexity involved in scheduling sessions that accommodate different time zones; and the possibility that a hybrid conference might lead to first and second class citizens, where the people who attend in person enjoy coffee breaks and social events after paper sessions, while online attendees have to log off. This would achieve a diversity of attendees, with scholars from the Global South being able to access events remotely, but could also lead to segregating online participants, thereby not achieving inclusion. The paper's insights are informed by a survey of several AIS chapters from the Global South and feedback from Senior Scholars and AIS conference organizers.

In the fifth article, Cram and D'Arcy (2023) explore employee judgements of cybersecurity legitimacy as a new angle for understanding employee compliance with cybersecurity policies. Using a three-wave survey, they find that negative legitimacy judgements mediate the relationship between management support and compliance, as well as between cybersecurity inconvenience and compliance. The results provide support for cybersecurity legitimacy as an important influence on employee compliance with cybersecurity initiatives. This is significant because it highlights to managers the importance of not simply expecting compliant employee behavior to follow from the introduction of cybersecurity initiatives, but that employees need to be convinced that the initiatives are fair and reasonable.

The sixth article is the sole survivor of the first paper development workshop that we organised in June 2021. It is introduced in a separate editorial (Eckhardt, 2023) by the organiser and editor of the paper development workshops.

We complete this issue with a short editorial (Davison et al., 2023) in which we explore the genre of practitioner papers, a recently revamped category of submission at the ISJ. We describe what we are looking for in a practitioner paper and explain the criteria that we suggest could be used to evaluate such submissions.

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