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Editorial

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Published in:
Information Systems Journal

Published: 01/05/2014

Document Version:
Post-print, also known as Accepted Author Manuscript, Peer-reviewed or Author Final version

Publication record in CityU Scholars:
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Published version (DOI):
[10.1111/isj.12035](https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12035)

Publication details:
Davison, R. M. (2014). Editorial. *Information Systems Journal*, 24(3), 203-205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12035>

Citing this paper

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In this third issue of volume 24, my editorial focuses on the critical importance of context in research. All the research that we do has a context: for instance, it may relate to the geographical or spatial location where the research was performed, or the cultural and demographic attributes of the people being studied. Context is important because it helps a reader to interpret the research and its findings. If a study of ERP implementation draws on a survey of engineers in India, and if furthermore, Indian contextual or cultural factors are drawn upon in the research design and discussion, then this is valuable contextual information for readers, who may be cautious about extrapolating (generalising) the findings to dissimilar contexts. Likewise, a study of undergraduate students from the USA and their online shopping habits may be valid in similar contexts, but rather less valid in contexts where different cultural norms apply. Sadly, a lot of published IS research appears to be acontextual – the authors appear to assume blithely that context and culture does not matter. The three-dimensional palimpsest of life, with all its intriguing flavours, colours, influences, perspectives is reduced to a two-dimensional slate where all that matters is the specific research design: context is utterly neglected. As an editor, I see far too many submissions that are acontextual – and in my editorial comments, I often reflect on this, urging the authors to be a little less opaque with respect to context, to fill in the details that would help readers make sense of their research. This sensemaking is critical – for if our research does not make sense, why bother to publish it?

Having recognised the value of context, we must also be careful not to over-generalise the validity of our findings. Inevitably, when findings are limited by context, as most research in the behavioural sciences is, so generalisation of those findings must be handled with caution. In similar vein, authors need to be careful with the literature that they cite. If authors are describing a study of how Chinese CIOs make decisions, then it would seem sensible for the literature review to include previous research on CIO decision making in general, as well as decision making in China in particular. Ignoring the Chinese literature on the topic, and in particular the specific cultural features of decision making in the Chinese context, would seem paradoxical at best! Yet, alas, this is too often what happens: the contextually relevant is omitted or accorded minimal respect, while the broader literature is assumed to be of universal relevance, notwithstanding my comments on the importance of context above, and hence is relied on to the exclusion of anything that directly pertains to the context itself. In a recent study of how Taiwanese teachers contribute to knowledge portals (Young et al., 2012) I was delighted to see the authors making extensive use of the Chinese concept of *mianzi* (face): a reluctance to contribute is associated with a fear of the negative gaze of powerful others. Such culturally-rich research not only highlights the critical importance of context, but opens up new research directions. Face is certainly not an exclusively Chinese concern, even though it is important in the Chinese context. Studies of face and its impact on behaviour in non-Chinese contexts would be very welcome. But the underlying message is that context is all enveloping – we exclude it at our peril.

In this issue of the ISJ, we present four papers, each contextually rich and explicit.

In the first paper, Karin Olesen (2014) notes that the way we make sense of an Information System influences how we use and adopt it. She suggests that our sensemaking is undertaken through cognitive knowledge structures that relate to technology, i.e. technology frames. As technology changes, so the technological frames should also change as we continually attempt to make sense. Olesen reports on a ten-year longitudinal study into sense making activities in an Australasian university context. She finds that senior management's technological frames are incongruent with those developed and used by academics and IT support staff, with senior manager's frames dominating those of other groups. Further

analysis of the incongruences demonstrated how major Information Systems are used inefficiently, with the dominance of senior management contributing to this phenomenon.

In the second paper, Marlei Pozzebon, Dale Mackrell and Susan Nielsen (2014) explore “the adoption of a pluralist theoretical framework – one that is also multiparadigmatic – for conducting and publishing information systems (IS) research” (ibid.). They illustrate their work through a single case study of the Australian cotton industry. The paper makes a valuable contribution to a number of literatures, notably sociomateriality and gender studies: the authors note that the diversity of theoretical perspectives enabled them to reveal a similar diversity of findings: the illuminate the social roles of women, the materiality of the cotton farming context and the mutually recursive morphing that occurs between human agency and institutional pressures.

In the third paper, Viswanath Venkatesh, Tracy Ann Sykes and Srinivasan Venkatraman draw on field study data from a village in rural India in order to test a model of e-Government portal use. As the authors note, e-Government is a critical component of the struggle to bridge the digital divide in developing countries, India being a case in point. Effectively implemented, and used, e-Government portals can bring significant advantage to the marginalised rural poor. In this contextually-sensitive paper, the authors engage deeply with the information needs of their target stakeholders: India’s rural masses and their quest for information that can transform their lives. Many developing countries are considering e-Government initiatives: this study provides evidence of the value that can be realised through e-Government portals in rural contexts.

In the last paper, Yusef Jung and Kalle Lyytinen (2014) examine the adaptive nature of media choice and “explore the role of a plurality of choice factors and their interactions in shaping media choice processes and outcomes” (ibid.). Through an ecological field study, and drawing on a theory of affordances, propose systemically how users leverage media affordances that are directed at the accomplishment of a communication task. Their field design involves a study of three different people/job types/institutional contexts, though the precise societal cultural context is not identified. In all three cases, the preferred medium of choice is email, but each key informant reaches the decision to use email through a different path in which media affordances and properties were identified.

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