

The Practice of Information Systems Research

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Introduction

In early 2025, after some years of debate, we, the founding editors, established a new journal: the *Information Systems Practice Journal (ISPJ)*. Although practice-based and practice-oriented research was common in the early years of our discipline (1970s-80s), it later fell into disfavour with the increasing focus on theoretical contributions and what might be characterised in some journals as a 'slavish devotion' to the principles of what has become conventional research. This conventional research is often technology-centric, with researchers more or less overtly looking for opportunities to explore the potential value of some technology, perhaps motivating their research design and questions with the thought that no one had previously undertaken the same investigation, yet paying little genuine attention to the practical problem context in which a technology might be deployed.

Nevertheless, over the last decade we have witnessed a resurgent interest in practice-oriented research (Davison et al., 2023; Davison et al., 2026; Moeini et al., 2019) that intends to promote conversations among researchers and practitioners, even to the extent that some mainstream journals (e.g. *Information Systems Journal*, *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*) include sections specifically for practice-oriented articles and indeed encourage their submission. Several more practice-focused journals exist, both in Information Systems (IS) (e.g. *MIS Quarterly Executive*) and more generally in Business Management (e.g. *California Management Review*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Sloan Management Review*), and indeed of a less academic type for different groups of practitioners (e.g. *Communications of the ACM*, *IEEE's IT Professional*, *McKinsey Quarterly*, *CIO Magazine*).

In contrast to the existing outlets for practice-oriented research, and as we explain on our website (<http://ispj.net>), the *ISPJ* has been established in order to promote a problem-oriented (not just technology-oriented or theory-focused) view of research into the sociotechnical practice of IS. It provides a new venue for researchers and practitioners to engage in an intellectual conversation. The *ISPJ* will publish research that incorporates novel insights that inform and are relevant to IS practitioners, academics who engage with IS practitioners and readers more generally.

As higher education institutions are increasingly recognising the value of impact-focused research (e.g. the UK's Research Excellence Framework¹ and Knowledge Exchange Framework²), we envisage that the *ISPJ* will become a key player in a global IS practice community, responding to a global shift that increasingly values research with tangible and insightful practical and policy implications (Carter et al., 2021). Borrowing from AACSB guidelines³, we believe that impactful research must go beyond theory and demonstrate meaningful contributions to practice, whether in organisations, policy or society. Globally, higher education institutions are increasingly expected to demonstrate their value to the communities they serve not only through teaching and scholarship, but also by enabling meaningful, practical interventions that contribute to the improvement of society.

¹ repository.jisc.ac.uk/9181/1/REF2028-research-excellence-framework-2028.pdf

² www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-collaboration/supporting-collaboration-research-england/knowledge-exchange-framework/

³ www.aacsb.edu/insights/reports/2025/research-impact-framework-exposure-draft

ISPJ's Unique Identity

The *ISPJ* targets submissions that examine sociotechnical phenomena and contexts, i.e. where people, technology, culture, information, processes, systems and structures intersect. Authors should explicitly take a position that is problem-focused and contextually rich and then incorporate aspects of IS that are relevant to both the nature of the problem and the recommendations that are made for addressing that problem in an identifiable context. The *ISPJ* welcomes multidisciplinary approaches that bring diverse perspectives. We are particularly interested in studies addressing complex practical issues regarding sociotechnical phenomena. We expect to see a focus on the design, use, deployment, maintenance, management, and/or implications of IS phenomena in these sociotechnical contexts. Thus, IS-related issues of interest to practitioners should lie at the heart of the problem being investigated and the authors should provide actionable and meaningful recommendations for practice, at least some of which transcend the immediate problem context and are likely to remain relevant at least in the short term.

It is important to note that the *ISPJ* will **not** publish purely technical studies, descriptions of technologies that lack a social or application context, general business research, hypothetical scenarios, mathematical models, teaching cases, or research that is otherwise tangentially related to IS. Indeed, the motivation for a study that leads to an article submitted to *ISPJ* should not be a simple interest in, or to explore the potential of, a technology.

In contrast to conventional quantitative research undertaken under the aegis of a positivist epistemology, where statistical generalisation is the objective, we adopt a broader, practice-centric view of generalisation. We encourage scholars to ensure that their research designs should have clear boundaries, such that the authors can explain in what specific contexts their findings could have some practical relevance. Lee and Baskerville (2003), Seddon and Scheepers (2012) and Davison and Martinsons (2016) provide some relevant exemplification of how we view generalisation and context. Articles published in *ISPJ* should maintain appropriate standards of intellectual rigour and ethical research conduct. We expect that authors will 'speak' to a specific practitioner audience; we also require that published articles be 'consumable' by scholars who are not experts in the particular field of the research.

Authors may cite both the academic and practitioner literature and, if they wish, draw on relevant theories and concepts as a basis for framing their research problem or guiding the design and development of solutions. However, neither novel theoretical contributions, nor exhaustive methodological details are expected in articles submitted to *ISPJ*. Instead, as we further detail below, the focus is on the practical problem in question, and the actionable practical recommendations.

Scope, Problematisation and Contributions

The *ISPJ* has a global scope and solicits manuscripts from authors across the world written for a diverse global audience. The journal welcomes research situated in and/or addressing problems that span the entire spectrum of development, from developed to emerging and underdeveloped economies, in the Global North and Global South. It is, nonetheless, important that authors be explicit with respect to the locations to which their study and recommendations pertain.

It is critical that authors problematise their areas of investigation and seek to identify a current problem situation in a practice context. Authors should never rely on a literature gap to make the case for the

relevance and contribution of their study (see Chatterjee and Davison, 2021). Authors should clearly explain who cares about the problem and why, and who would like to see it solved and how. We expect that authors approach a problem from novel perspectives, including, but not limited to, managerial, organisational and social perspectives. Authors should explore how key stakeholders experience the problem and provide recommendations that will be relevant to practitioners and other readers of the journal.

We invite submissions that critically analyse IS in practice and shed light on the underlying sociotechnical causes of problems, as well as their consequences. For instance, a study on IS failure is perfectly legitimate, with such failure incorporating elements of software inadequacy, mismanagement, work process re/design, and cultural differences, among others. Many IS initiatives are implemented at the behest of managers, yet those same IS do not always support work adequately, especially when they ignore the legitimate needs of employees and contextual idiosyncrasies. A study may also examine practical IS issues at a broader societal level such as the implications of technology regarding Data Justice or AI bias whereas political dimensions of technology introduction related to marginalisation and exploitation represent other suitable research areas. Significant practical insights could come from research into such situations. It is essential that authors demonstrate convincing support for their arguments, with big-picture thinking and/or strong practical recommendations emerging from the research, even if the recommendations are necessarily local in scope.

Currently we are open to different types of submission, both in terms of length and focus. These include both more traditional research submissions, opinion pieces, commentaries and interviews. We encourage authors to remember that practitioner readers may not have easy access to academic research articles in otherwise paywalled libraries, and so to cite literature that is more readily available, including from the practitioner literature. Extensive citing of academic literature is not recommended.

In addition to the above, we welcome feedback and are open to alternative approaches and foci which may have not been captured in this Editorial. We encourage prospective authors to contact us prior to making a submission.

Authors and Ethics

Authors submitting to the journal may be practitioners, academics, consultants, or ideally a combination of these. Authors may be associated with all manner of public and private organisations, including government, communities, charities, non-governmental organisations and others, who have unique stories to tell based on their particular experience with IS. We prefer at least one author to be a practitioner, to ensure that the practical perspective is front and centre in the study submitted for consideration. Practitioners do not need to be managers or executives; they can be at any level and in any role.

Potential authors from academia should only submit practice-focused research to *ISPJ* if they are deeply engaged in the problem situation. Besides academics co-authoring with practitioners, other potential contributors could be adjunct and clinical professors, and students who, although engaged in higher-level study, are themselves practitioners in organisations. Authors who are unfamiliar with academic research are encouraged to work with academics in higher education institutions to leverage the best of both worlds, bringing insights into the practice of IS combined with the perspective and methodological experience that academics can provide.

While the use of Generative AI (GAI) tools for mundane research-related tasks, such as spelling and grammar checking, may be permitted, GAI tools must **not** be used for any intellectual task, such as problem identification and development of research questions, synthesis and analysis of literature, data analysis, development of theoretical arguments, and discussion of findings. For these intellectual activities, we insist that the human agency should not be replaced or substituted. For a more detailed discussion of ethical issues, as well as current policy, please see the *ISPJ's* website. Please also refer to Davison et al. (2024) for a discussion of the ethical issues associated with using GAI for qualitative data analysis.

It is important to note that academic authors are required to obtain ethical approval from their own institutions where this is possible and to deposit their data, or a description of their dataset, in research repositories in an effort to increase transparency about the collected data. The presence of an academic co-author can greatly facilitate this approval and deposition since practitioner co-authors may not have ready access to such facilities. For qualitative research where it may not be possible to share data in repositories, a brief dataset description (to be incorporated in the methods section of the submission) usually suffices. Thus, while ethical approval is, as per the principles of our profession, necessary, a metadata statement in the method is encouraged but not formally required. This means that, for example, if researchers are collecting interview data that they later ask a GAI tool to transcribe or translate, they must first secure the explicit affirmative consent of each interviewee. A transparency statement from the authors that details precisely how GAI tools were used could usefully be included as part of the cover letter.

Open Access and Sponsorship

The *ISPJ* is open access. Authors do **not** need to pay an article processing (or publication) charge [APC]. At the same time, readers do not need to pay to access published articles. Instead, we operate a sponsorship model: each **issue** of the journal is sponsored by an organisation, with the current level of sponsorship being HKD25,000 per issue (approximately GBP2500, USD3200, EUR3000). We expect that a typical issue will contain approximately 100,000 words of text, distributed across 10-20 articles of varying length.

A sponsoring organisation, in addition to visibility on the journal's websites, may elect to champion a special issue on a topic of their choice that lies within the scope of the journal. For more details about special issues, please contact the Editor-in-Chief.

At the time of writing, five organisations have agreed to sponsor one issue each: Department of Information Systems at the University of Agder, Norway; European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS) at the University of Münster, Germany; Business Information Systems discipline at The University of Queensland, Australia; ESCP Business School, France, and Centro di Ricerca su Tecnologie, Innovazione e Servizi Finanziari (CeTIF) at the Catholic University of Milan, Italy.

Conclusion

We conclude with a call for submissions and an alert that we have now accepted our first article. Per Persson engages with the thorny problem of how top-down IT project governance hampers local government operations in the Swedish Food Agency across 290 municipalities. In this qualitative case study, the author identified systemic failures that emerged due to unclear mandates, vendor lock-in and institutional culture. A number of recommendations are made for practice.

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Bios

Christoph F. Breidbach is Associate Professor of Business Information Systems (BIS) at The University of Queensland, where he also leads the BIS Discipline. His empirical and conceptual research addresses fundamental questions of digital transformation in service settings. He published over 50 peer-reviewed papers on the topic, with recent work appearing in leading journals such as *Journal of the Association of Information Systems*, *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Organizational Research Methods*, or *MIS Quarterly Executive*, as well as in the ICIS, ECIS, and PACIS proceedings. Dr Breidbach is a Distinguished Member of the AIS, currently serves as Associate Editor for the *Information Systems Journal* and led the AIS Special Interest Group "Services" as elected President from 2018-2021.

Petros Chamakiotis is Professor of Technology Management in the Department of Management at ESCP Business School (Madrid Campus). His research focuses on: (a) individual experiences of digital technologies, including their influences on work-life boundaries; (b) team-level digital transformation, including the development of hybrid/virtual teams; and (c) social value engendered by digital technologies in the Global South and in the context of forced migration. Petros has published in numerous relevant journals, including *Information Systems Journal*; *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*; *Organizational Dynamics*; *New Technology, Work and Employment*; *Social Science & Medicine*; *International Journal of Information Management*; and *Information Technology for Development*. He has significant editorial experience and his research is featured frequently in international media and the popular press.

Hameed Chughtai is Senior Lecturer at Lancaster University, UK. He worked in software engineering for 13 years before joining academia; he currently serves as an Associate Editor and Guest Senior Editor of the *Information Systems Journal*, Senior Editor of the *Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries* and Chair of the IFIP Working Group 9.5. He is the incoming Editor-in-Chief of the *Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries* from January 2026.

Robert M Davison is Professor of Information Systems at the City University of Hong Kong. His research focuses on problem solving with information systems, especially situations where employees are required to use a corporate system that doesn't fit their needs. He has published over 400 papers in conference proceedings and journals, has presented his research in 50+ countries globally, and, in addition to being the founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Information Systems Practice Journal (ISPJ)*, he is also Editor-in-Chief of the *Information Systems Journal (ISJ)* (since 2012) and the co-founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries (EJISDC)* (2001-2025). He is perhaps best known for his scholarship in Action Research, having published a number of methods-oriented and empirical articles, and running masterclasses that are centred on the application of this method.

Antonio Díaz Andrade is Professor of Information Systems at the University of Agder, Norway. He has a strong interest in the information and communication technology for development (ICT4D) area and qualitative methods. He regularly contributes to IS journals and conferences as an author, presenter, editor and reviewer.

Daniel Gozman is Associate Professor at the University of Sydney Business School, where he leads research and teaching in digital transformation, financial technology (FinTech), and AI governance. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Daniel's work bridges academia and industry, with collaborations involving global institutions such as SWIFT. His research has been published in top-tier journals and cited in policy reports across Europe, Africa, and Asia. Daniel contributes to shaping digital policy and international standards through roles held with the British Standards Institute and Standards Australia. He has held editorial positions at *Journal of Information Technology*, *Information Systems Journal*, *European Journal of Information Systems* and *MISQ Executive*. He is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a Freeman of the City of London. Prior to academia, Daniel worked as a management consultant.

Stan Karanasios is Professor of Information Systems and Director of Higher Degree Research (PhD Program) at the University of Queensland. He also holds a Visiting Professorship at the University of Southampton. His research focuses on the societal and organizational impacts of digital technologies. He has published in leading Information Systems journals, including *Information Systems Research*, *MIS Quarterly*, *Journal of the Association of Information Systems* and *Information Systems Journal*. He holds editorial roles for several journals, including *Information Systems Journal*, *European Journal for Information Systems*, and the *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*. He is regularly featured in the media, and also consults for industry, government and international organizations on digital transformation and technology governance.

Marco Marabelli is Professor of Computer Information Systems at Bentley University (US), where he currently teaches graduate courses on business analytics and AI, as well as a PhD class on grounded theory. Marco's research focuses on social justice and the role of technology. Marco is particularly interested in the ethical implications of technologies such as AI and the metaverse in organizations and society, and in understanding the reasons behind institutional inertia in addressing potential algorithmic misuse. One of Marco's goals is to pursue research that can be translated into practice and generate broader impact for organizations and society. Current projects include studying various aspects of generative AI, from its role in the research process and organizational settings to its impact on global warming.

Carol Ou is Professor of Business Information Systems at Tilburg University, the Netherlands, and Distinguished Member -Cum Laude- of the Association for Information Systems (AIS). She serves as a senior editor for *Information Systems Journal*, *Information & Management*, *IT & People*, and *Information Systems Practice Journal*. She publishes widely and leads various project grants in close collaboration with both public and private sectors.

Ravi Patnayakuni is Senior Information Systems Faculty and Director of the Enterprise Systems Lab at the College of Business at The University of Alabama in Huntsville. Before his current appointment, he held positions at Temple University and The University of Melbourne. His research interests are eclectic and include IT implementation, innovation diffusion, organizational impacts of IT, supply chain systems, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. His work has appeared in premier journals including *Information Systems Journal*, *MIS Quarterly*, *Journal of MIS*, *Decision Sciences* and *IEEE Transactions on Engineering and Management*. He serves as a Senior Editor for the *Information Systems Journal* and *Information Systems Practice Journal* and has previously served as an Associate Editor at *Decision Sciences*. More recently, his focus has been on the integration of scholarship, practice, and student development. He is committed to advancing impactful research by connecting theory to practice and demonstrating measurable contributions to organizational and institutional effectiveness.

Dimitra Petrakaki is Professor of Technology and Organization at the University of Sussex Business School and Co-Investigator of the ESRC-funded Digital Futures at Work Research Centre. Her work focuses on the implications of digital technology for the organization of work, particularly in the context of healthcare. She is interested in questions around power/knowledge, in the neo-colonial implications of digitalisation in the Global South and on the environmental effects of online work in clinical settings. Dimitra's research has appeared in the *Journal of Management Studies*, the *Information Systems Journal*, *Social Science & Medicine*, *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *Harvard Business Review* and others. She is a Senior Editor of the *Information Systems Journal* and of *Information Systems Practice Journal* and member of the editorial boards of *New Technology*, *Work & Employment* and *International Journal of Information Management*.

Gerhard Schwabe has been Full Professor at the University of Zurich since 2002. His research interests focus on the intersection of collaborative technologies and information management. He has published in major IS conferences, IS journals, and computer science conferences (like CHI, CSCW, and ICSE). Currently, his research interests focus on Generative AI applications, Human AI collaboration, human drone collaboration, and government as a platform. He has been collaborating with companies and governments for decades.

Angsana Techatassanasoontorn is Professor of Information Systems at the Auckland University of Technology. She takes a human-centric approach to her scholarly work with a lifelong goal to cultivate a human-centred purpose of digital technology for all. Her primary fields of interest are human values and digital innovation, digital technology in the public interest, and emerging technologies and sociodigital futures. Her work has been published in *AIS Transactions on HCI*, *Decision Support Systems*, *Information & Management*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *Journal of Information Technology*, and others. Her research has been supported by grants from the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the Commonwealth Fund Foundation, the NZ Health Research Council, Microsoft, the U.S. National Science Foundation, and Qualcomm, among others.

Philip Fei Wu is Professor of Information Management and Head of the Department of Information and Operations Management at Royal Holloway, University of London. His research explores human behaviour in technology-mediated environments from a sociopsychological perspective. More recently, his work has centred on digital health, online customer reviews, and digital labour platforms. He has published in leading academic journals including *ACM Transactions on Information Systems*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *Social Science & Medicine*, among others. He has experience working with both international corporations and technology startups as an employee (before becoming an academic) and as a research collaborator.