Workshop
Conducting Multi-Level Research in Information Systems

Presented by
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Background

Information systems (IS) research involves an exploration and understanding of the interplay between technologies and human actors who can be grouped in different ways, ranging from simple pairings of employee-manager within an office (a dyadic relationship) to complex virtual teams that span the globe (a group). Though researchers sometimes identify the impact of technologies and the accompanying socio-technical systems over several units of analysis, few researchers investigate their effects across multiple levels of analysis. Yet, information systems related phenomena, like other research domains, involve variables or constructs found at multiple levels of analysis. For example, in virtual team research, investigators often examine individuals’ perceptions and abilities, and their impact on group level outcomes such as performance or cohesion. Similarly, in information technology implementation research, individual resistance to a new system is often studied as affecting the success or failure of the implementation for the organization as a whole.

Problems can occur if researchers fail to recognize the nature of the phenomena they study when various entities (and their embedded individuals) interact with and affect each other. As a result, it is important for information systems researchers to reflect on their own research and evaluate whether or not they should consider multilevel issues, and to properly equip themselves to deal with potential cross level relationships for their constructs of interest.

Workshop Details

The workshop is intended to be highly interactive, allowing participants to evaluate how their own research can or should be conducted in a multilevel framework. The session begins with a discussion of what multilevel research is, presenting the characteristics of and methodological issues associated with multilevel research. The discussion will also include an overview of the current state of multilevel research in the information systems domain. The workshop then offers participants opportunities to explore how multilevel research can be included within their own research area, using guidelines for each of six phases of research development.

Presenter's Bio:
France Bélanger is Professor and Alumni Research Fellow in the Department of Accounting and Information Systems at Virginia Tech. Her research focuses on the use of communication technologies, in particular for distributed work and e-business, and on information privacy and security. She is widely published in the information systems field, including in such journals as Information Systems Research, MIS Quarterly, Communications of the ACM, Journal of Strategic Information Systems, various IEEE Transactions, Information Systems Journal, and many others. Dr. Bélanger co-authored the books E-Business Technologies (2003), and Evaluation and Implementation of Distance Learning: Technologies, Tools and Techniques (2000). She is Associate Editor of MIS Quarterly. Her work has been funded by several agencies, corporations and research centres, including the National Science Foundation. She was named a Fulbright Distinguished Chair in 2006 (Portugal) and an Erskine Fellow in 2009 (New Zealand).