The 3rd international SIG Prag workshop on
"IT Artefact Design & Workpractice Improvement"
ADWI-2014

June 2, 2014, Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen, Germany

Background – pragmatic perspectives

There have been many calls in the information systems (IS) community for a stronger pragmatic focus. This can be seen in a growing interest for research approaches and methods in IS that emphasise contribution to practice and collaboration between the practice and academia. Action research, which aims for knowledge development through collaboration and intervention in real settings, is achieving more and more academic credibility (Baskerville & Myers, 2004; Davison et al, 2004). This can also be said about design research that aims for the generation of new and useful artefacts (Hevner et al, 2004; Gregor & Jones, 2007). Research through evaluation has had a long and venerable place in IS research (Ward et, 1996; Serafeimidis & Smithson, 2003). Several approaches and frameworks that combine or integrate elements from the above-mentioned approaches have also emerged, e.g. practice research (Goldkuhl, 2011), collaborative practice research (Mathiassen, 2002), practical science (Gregor, 2008), engaged scholarship (Mathiassen & Nielsen, 2008), action design research (Sein et al, 2011) and technical action research (Wieringa & Morali, 2012). Underlying these different approaches is a quest for practical relevance of the conducted research (Benbasat & Zmud, 1999; Van de Ven, 2007; Wieringa, 2010). It is not enough to only "mirror" the world through descriptions and explanations but a pragmatic orientation recognizes intervention and design as a way of knowing and a means for building knowledge about social and institutional phenomena (Aakhus, 2007). There is a need for knowledge of other epistemic kinds that contributes more clearly to the improvement of IS practices.

A pragmatic orientation can also be seen in the increasing interest in the conceptualisation of practices, activities, agency and actions. Practice theorizing has gained an increased attention in IS studies (Orlikowski, 2008; Leonardi, 2011). There has been an interest for agency and action oriented theories in IS for quite some time; e.g. activity theory (Nardi, 1996), structuration theory (Orlikowski, 1992), social action theorizing (Hirschheim et al, 1996), human agency theorizing (Boudreau & Robey, 2005) and language action perspective (Winograd & Flores, 1986). From this follows also an interest for social and pragmatic views of the IT artefact (Aakhus & Jackson, 2005). This includes views of the IT artefact as contextually embedded and carriers of those social contexts (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001) and such artefacts being tools for action and communication (Ågerfalk, 2003; Markus & Silver, 2008). Design research practice and the contributions to practice through appropriation of knowledge and methods and the contributions to academia through knowledge artefacts has been discussed (Donnellan, Sjöström, Helfert, 2012).

This enhanced practice and action orientation follows a growing awareness within IS scholars towards pragmatism as a research foundation (e.g. Goles & Hirschheim, 2000; Ågerfalk, 2010; Goldkuhl, 2012). It is not the case that IS scholars suddenly become pragmatists in their research orientation. It is rather the case that there is move from an implicit pragmatism to an explicit one (Goldkuhl, 2012). For a long time IS scholars have addressed practical problems with an interest for improvement. That interest has led to the extensive development of methods, models and constructive frameworks for not only the design of IT artefacts, but also related to several other IS/IT phenomena like e.g. innovation management, business process management, project management, IT service management just to mention a few. These methods actually reveal an on-going search for knowledge of other epistemic kinds for advancing understanding of information technology, information systems, and practice.

Workshop site and purpose

After the success of the two ADWI workshops in 2012 and 2013, it is now time for a third workshop on *IT Artefact Design & Workpractice Improvement* (ADWI-2014). ADWI-2012 (www.vits.org/adwi/) was run in Barcelona in June 2012 and ADWI-2013 (www.vits.org/adwi2013/) was run in Tilburg in June 2013. ADWI-2014 will take place on June 2. ADWI-2014 will take place in Friedrichshafen (Germany) at the Zeppelin University located at the Lake Constance in the three nation triangle consisting of Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

ADWI-2014 intends to bring scholars and practitioners together for a knowledge exchange and development on research foundations and practical contributions concerning the design and improvement of IT artefacts and workpractices. The ADWI workshop is intended to be a developmental arena with thoughtful and constructive feedback from reviews and comments on site. ADWI should be a place where you can present ideas in papers and get fruitful feedback for further development of the papers. A developmental arena means also taking responsibility for pushing contributions further to high-quality journal publications. From the last two workshops (ADWI-2012 and ADWI-2013) several papers have been pushed further into special issues in the open access journal Systems, Signs & Actions. At least one special issue will be arranged in Systems, Signs & Actions inviting promising papers from ADWI-2014. The theme will be decided on later. We will possibly also work with some other outlet for another special issue. This depends on the outcome of the workshop.

Topics

The workshop can include papers from diverse fields of IS. We do not try to enumerate such fields below; we only present four broad topic areas (as three main pragmatic orientations). We invite papers to ADWI-2014 in the following areas:

- The design, selection, adaptation and use of *research methods* and *approaches* that emphasise improvement of, collaboration with and intervention in IS practices (e.g. approaches like action research, design research, evaluation research, practice research, engaged scholarship).
- The generation and use of *practice, activity, agency, action oriented theories* (or other types of knowledge) about IS phenomena.
- Different kinds of *knowledge* (e.g. practical theories, frameworks, models, methods) *that contribute to the improvement of IS practices*. This includes examples of such knowledge from improvement, which can be taken from diverse IS fields.
- Application of knowledge that can assist to innovate and improve practices in enterprises (case studies, solutions, organizational experiences).

An information system is always an embedded part of some practice. It is never an isolated entity without relations to social practices. The notion "IS practice", which is used in the topics above, stands for diverse IS related practices like e.g. strategizing, development, procurement, deployment, use, evaluation and service management of IS/IT.

Dates and submission details

Submissions: March 21, 2014
Notification: May 1, 2014
Final manuscripts: May 27, 2014
Workshop: June 2, 2014, Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen, Germany

The workshop website is www.vits.org/adwi2014/. The workshop will follow an ordinary scientific procedure with submission of papers and selection of papers through peer-review (pursued by an international program committee). Papers are expected to be between 5-16 pages. We welcome full research papers as well as shorter papers (work-in-progress or position papers). For submissions we use the EasyChair system. A format template can be found at the workshop website (www.vits.org/adwi2014/). Workshop proceedings will be electronically published and distributed. There will be a small workshop fee covering catering.

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More members to be announced.

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