

Lecture Notes in Information Systems and Organisation

Volume 2

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Paolo Spagnoletti
Editor

Organizational Change and Information Systems

Working and Living Together
in New Ways

 Springer

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Foreword

The IX Conference of the Italian chapter of AIS was held in Roma at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore on 28–29 September 2012. The conference presented a number of interesting research works around the conference topic, Organization change and Information Systems: Working and living together in new ways. This book contains a selection of the best papers presented at the conference.

While in other countries scholars often refer to their research area as “management of information systems”, in Italy we tend to use the phrase “organization of information systems.” It is a clear recognition of how studies of ICT in organizations are a core part of the organizational studies discipline in our country. In fact, such phenomenon remarks the originality of the Italian experience in terms of integration between two communities that abroad are, quite often, separate. In this respect, therefore, Italy is in a sense “ahead” if compared to other countries, and shows a significant strength and a distinctive feature of our joint endeavor.

If we go back to the mid-1990s, the Italian way to the study of information systems started to be closely related to the organizational studies domain. In fact, with the entry of leading figures such as Marco De Marco, Alessandro D’Atri, Gianni Jacucci, and Claudio Ciborra the community of organizational scholars has recognized studies on information systems as part of the core content of the organizational discipline. Alessandro and Claudio are no longer among us and our thoughts go to their memory as leading and passionate academics.

In the past 15 years, a number of changes affected both the academia and the practitioners arenas. The advent of Internet and ERP technologies, the continuous innovation in ICT (Wi-Fi, RFID, social networks), the availability of wide amount of data of corporate interest, new organizational forms driven by technology (virtual enterprises, network organizations,...) are only a few drivers that have been greatly affecting the business landscape and the way of working in organizations. New teaching opportunities and training courses have therefore been developed to meet such changes. New professional figures were needed to create interfaces between technology vendors and organizational designers. University courses were established in order to respond to such an increasing demand.

All of these novelties gave rise to new research approaches capable of shedding light on the variety and richness of the phenomena taking place in the business world. For too many years technology-oriented scholars had underestimated the

importance of the organizational consequences of technology, leading to implementation failures and to poor business results. In fact, on the research side, the rapidity of technological progress was a powerful driver of change and a matter of concern for organizational scholars. It has been an important element that kept organizational studies updated and aligned with the evolution of the business world.

A number of theories and research paradigms have therefore been launched to interpret this evolving reality. Organizational versus technological imperative, transaction cost economics applied to information systems, knowledge-based theories of organization, social constructivism, critical management studies, are only a few of the research approaches of the past two decades.

The Italian community has greatly contributed to the scientific debate by hosting a number of international conferences, such as ECIS 2003 in Napoli, ECIS 2009 in Verona, the annual ItAIS meetings (the first ItAIS was held at University of Napoli Federico II in 2004), ALPIS, MCIS 2007, and the forthcoming ICIS 2013 in Milano. On these occasions significant advancements have been brought about in the scientific debate and have explored established research practices and institutional arrangements in new and often radical ways.

Many Workshops of the Italian scholars of Organizational studies (WOA) have included in their programs sections and tracks on information systems, and a growing number of Italian scholars have participated in outstanding committees and scientific committees of international conferences, journal special issues, and edited book collections.

I firmly believe that the ItAIS community represents a stimulating environment where to debate controversial topics within organizational studies. I am very glad that we have managed to establish a sound and fertile relationship among organizational and information systems scholars, two cultures that draw on an ultimate common goal: letting organizations of the twenty-first century work in a better way.

R. Mercurio
Università di Napoli Federico II

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