Information Systems: Crossroads for Organization, Management, Accounting and Engineering
Information Systems is a relatively new discipline, albeit preaced by a fascinating history. Like all new disciplines, it took a huge effort before it finally earned recognition as a discipline in its own right, and not as a subset of other already entrenched disciplines. After taking a few years to debate whether IS could rightly be called a discipline, most would agree that indeed it was a discipline and, moreover, that it could be considered a reference discipline.

In addition, the fact that IS has a hybrid nature, made up of two different but interacting strands – technical on the one side (computer science and natural sciences) and humanistic on the other (organization science and social sciences) – was rebutted by the louder voices in the debate on the nature and content of Information Systems. Nevertheless, even though the earliest Information Systems studies focused mainly on the technical side, since then the importance of the humanistic side has grown considerably.

But what exactly are the distinctive features of the IS discipline?

It would be very helpful to have a basic and widely accepted definition of the diacritical features of Information Systems today. Computer Science, Information Science, Engineering Science, Management Science and Organization Science are just some of the disciplines that cross our path when we start to look more closely at the use of computers in the workplace. Intersections both manifest and complex that lead us to raise an obvious question “Do we really need another area of study? What areas of interest are not already covered by the other disciplines?”

Information Systems studies is the umbrella for a striking variety of research contributions, from those that address subjects such as computer performance measures to those that explore the psychological models of human behaviour, from papers on the strategic issues of e-government projects to the study of semantics and ontology.

The scope of IS covers a broad spectrum of subjects, but is also a constantly shifting landscape, shaped by ongoing and significant change. A comparison of the IS studies produced in the 1970s with those of the present day shows just how much that landscape has changed, as we will see in the following sections. The probable causes are many, although the fast rate of technological innovation in the IT arena is
indubitably a key driver. As a consequence, IS contributions are evolving in step with technological developments and the need for new IS studies generated by IT-enabled organizational innovations is now more likely than the other way round.

As a result, the publications authored by a great number of scholars play a major role because they frame the topical subjects that come to light as the discipline evolves. Indeed, the fact that the IS discipline is highly dependent on technological advances and on the changes in the way technology is used in our daily life transform the choice of the subjects of study into a moving target.

The editors of such publications face a tough yet challenging job when it comes to grouping together the various papers into homogeneous chapters.

In this book, we have chosen to present the following chapters:

- eServices in Public and Private Sectors
- Organizational change and the Impact of ICT in Public and Private Sectors
- Information and Knowledge Management
- Human-Computer Interaction
- Information Systems, Innovation Transfer, and new Business Models
- Business Intelligence Systems, their Strategic Role and Organizational Impacts
- New Ways to Work and Interact with the Internet
- IS, IT and Security
- Blending Design and Behavioral Research in Information Systems
- Professional Skills, Certification of Curricula, On-line Education and Communities
- IS Design, IS Development, Metrics and Compliance
- ICT4LAW: Information and communication technologies to help firms, public administrations, legislators and citizens to operate in a highly regulated world.

By making this choice we hope to both provide a service to our academic community and to play our part in the drive to define the subjects and the research methodologies of our discipline and, thus, to help sharpen the focus on IS and its eclectic/hybrid nature.

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