2013 PACIS Panel on IS History

South Korea, 2013.06

IS History: What It Is and How to Best Represent it

Moderator: Ping Zhang, AIS Historian, Syracuse University

Panelists:

- Richard Baskerville, Former EIC of EJIS and Past-Chair of WG 8.2 and WG 8.11, Georgia State University
- Detmar Straub, AIS LEO Award winner, EIC of MISQ, Georgia State University
- Doug Vogel, AIS President, AIS Fellow, City University of Hong Kong

Panel Theme

As part of the first initiatives, the AIS History Task Force is organizing panels at IS conferences, including ECIS, PACIS, AMCIS and ICIS. This is one type of activity that will help collect as well as communicate/share the IS history with the community. The main idea is to invite the most influential pioneers in our field as the panelists to offer their memories, opinions, suggestions, and share such with the audience.

At PACIS, the theme of the panel is: What exactly is a history of a field and how do we effectively disseminate this history so it becomes part of the fabric of the field?

The targeted audience is scholars who are interested in the IS discipline and its history. They may benefit from the memories and opinions of panelists as well as of other members of the audience on issues related to the panel theme. They may become engaged in contributing to the preservation, collection and dissemination of IS history in the future.

Panel Structure and Expected Outcomes

The panelists will present personal recollections on the following topics. Each panelist will address all three topics. Then the audience will be welcome to dialogue with the panelists by responding to the panelists and/or providing their own comments.

- Topic 1. Historical “facts”: What they don’t tell you officially
- Topic 2. Challenges with publishing IS histories and how to disseminate histories
- Topic 3. Learning from the history: How does history help us in the future

A questionnaire will be collected during the panel time from the audience to focus on the following:

- Audience’s responses to the three topics
- Audience’s additional comments on IS history
- Audience’s willingness to be involved and if so their IDs
- Audience’s evaluation of the panel and suggestions for future activities related to IS history
The panel session will be videotaped and made available in the AIS e-lib as part of the IS history collection. The panel content, discussions and expansions eventually will be written up into publications to foster preservation and broad dissemination. The feedback from the questionnaire will be used to guide future efforts on IS History.

Position Statements from the Panelists

**Richard:** I will take the position that history is an interpretative explanation of facts about the past in the context of the present. However, because the IS field lacks good archives, IS history is currently given only in the context of the facts supplied as part of the historian’s interpretive explanations. This situation means the history and the facts become conflated and difficult to isolate. As a result, it enables only one version of history. This limitation sometimes cripples our ability to publish historical accounts because these are subject to the criticism that the basis of the history is anecdotal. It also cripples future and alternative revisions that might depend on facts unspecified in the singular interpretation. Because the context of the history is difficult to change, anecdotal history is less useful to future generations of scholars. The solution is better archival practices that enable the IS field to preserve not just its current version of its history, but an archive of its artefacts (such as documents, multi-media, data, devices, etc.).

**Detmar:** We tried a special issue in JAIS and got mostly papers about the development of IS research streams. I think that another special issue might invite people to write on the topics in the panel. This would be especially useful if one of our “A” journals did this. I will provide some definitions of history that might be useful to define “historiography” and why defining a field and suggesting what it is supposed to be doing is tricky.

**Doug:** My position will be to reflect on personal interactions with many of the discipline’s founding members over the years. My disciplinary longevity and interest in seeing history preserved to assist us in looking towards the future is the nature of my background and inclinations.

Overview of the Moderator and Panelists

**Ping Zhang** is Professor in the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University. She was one of the key developers of the very first MIS ever custom built in China (1984-1986). After researching and practicing on developing MIS for three different organizations in China for five years (Nanjing Automobile Manufacture, Beijing TV Factory, and Beijing Insurance Company), she decided to pursue a PhD on MIS. Her current research interests include the intellectual development of information related fields; human-centeredness in ICT development, evaluation and use; affective, cognitive, motivational and behavioral aspects of individual reactions towards ICT; and the impact of ICT design and use on individuals, organizations, societies and cultures.

**Richard Baskerville** is a Board of Advisors Professor of Information Systems at Georgia State University, Atlanta. He is Editor Emeritus of the European Journal of Information Systems, and former chair of IFIP Working Groups 8.2 and 8.11/11.13. He historical focus is on the role of IS history in shaping the IS professional identity.

**Detmar Straub** is a Regent’s Professor of the University System of Georgia and the J. Mack Robinson Distinguished Professor of Information Systems at Georgia State University. Detmar has conducted research in the areas of Net-enhanced organizations (e-Commerce), information security, technological
innovation, IS methodological issues, and international IT studies. He holds a DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) in MIS from Indiana and a PhD in English from Penn State. He has published 165 plus papers in journals such as MIS Quarterly, Management Science, Information Systems Research, Organization Science, Journal of MIS, Journal of AIS, Information & Management, Communications of the AIS, IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, Communications of the ACM, OMEGA, Academy of Management Executive, and Sloan Management Review. Detmar is the Editor-in-Chief of MIS Quarterly, with a term ending in January of 2012. Previously he has served as Senior Editor for MIS Quarterly, Information Systems Research, Journal of the AIS (JAIS) and DATA BASE. He was also Co-Editor of DATA BASE for Advances in Information Systems. Previously, he was Associate Editor for Management Science as well as an editorial board member on a host of other journals. His consultancies with industry have been in the areas of information security, e-Commerce, and technological innovation. He teaches masters level courses at Georgia State University in: eCommerce Strategy, IT Strategies for Management, Systems Integration and IT Outsourcing, International IT Policies and Issues, and Computer Security Management, and doctoral seminars in Quantitative Research Methods in Business, & Experimental Design. He serves as Director of Research and Doctoral Programs in the Robinson College of Business. He is former VP of Publications for the Association for Information Systems. He was appointed an AIS Fellow in 2005. He is the 2008 winner of the Alumni Distinguished Professor Award at Georgia State University, given annually for high achievement in research, teaching and service in a faculty of 1,050 persons.

Doug Vogel Professor of Information Systems at the City University of Hong Kong and is an Association for Information Systems (AIS) Fellow as well as AIS President. He received his M.S. in Computer Science from U.C.L.A. and his Ph.D. in Management Information Systems from the University of Minnesota where he was also research coordinator for the MIS Research Center. In a ten year relationship with a Colorado electronics manufacturer he served in virtually every technical and managerial capacity including Director of Engineering, General Manager and Board of Directors. He has published widely and been recognized as the most-cited IS author in Asia Pacific. Professor Vogel's teaching and research interests bridge the business and academic communities in addressing issues of information system creation and impact on aspects of interpersonal communication, group problem solving, cooperative learning, and multi-cultural team productivity. His interests reflect a concern for encouraging efficient and effective utilization of computer systems in an atmosphere conducive to enhancing the quality of life. He is especially active in introducing group support technology into enterprises and educational systems. His particular focus emphasizes integration of audio, video, and data in interactive distributed group support. His interest in IS history, in part, is a result of personal interactions with many of the discipline’s founding members over the years.