History and Philosophy Department of CAIS

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Historical and philosophical research represent two genres that are necessary for any field of study to be recognized as a legitimate discipline. The Association for Information System (AIS) affirmed the significance of this effort by establishing a History Task Force and the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* is leading the way through a permanent department to disseminate history articles and encourage a broader level of participation. Philosophical research in IS follows a somewhat different path but is undergoing a similar renaissance within the IS community. Thanks to the late Paul Gray who encouraged a spirit of open debate on philosophical issues, the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* has also led such discussions. However, just like historical studies in IS, there is so much more that can be accomplished for the benefit of the IS community and the field. Both historical and philosophical studies provide unique lens that open IS research to different perspectives compared to that of more traditional empirical studies. Historical and philosophical papers are notoriously difficult to publish, in part because finding qualified reviewers can be challenging. Consequently, younger researchers are not only deterred from writing historical and philosophical papers, they may be viewed with some degree of disapproval. The goal of this History and Philosophy Department of the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* is to turn this state of affairs around and to provide a broad-based channel where innovative and insightful discussions can take place.

Essentially, historical papers can take the shape of the history of IS and IT or technology in general, and also the history of the field of IS or other allied fields that would have relevance for the IS field. It can also take the shape of empirical papers that are written with an historical and philosophical lens. Genres of historical studies that are acceptable for publication in the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* include but not limited to studies that:

- Analyze antecedents precipitating significant developments in technology or the IS field
- Uncover who we are, where we come from and where we are headed as a means of establishing a sustainable identity and engendering legitimacy
- Map out the evolution of IS and the field, and what brought us here today, including both our successes and our failings
- Identify and abstract traditions that provide innovative and fecund insights
- Highlight discontinuities in the history of IS development
- Place rapid technological changes in historical light making them less strange and unfamiliar
- View ourselves from the point of view of others and their histories, and integrate with philosophical analyses

Philosophical papers promise an equally exciting array of possibilities. For philosophy papers, the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* is looking for any genre of

research, in any domain with philosophical content that is accessible and challenge all levels of understanding. Potential submissions could attempt to:

- Reexamine the foundations and assumptions of IS subfields and domains of research
- Connect directly to the demands and concerns of both the field and the society it is in
- Actively engage in the discussions on realism, antirealism, the metaphysics of information and the IT artifact, research methods, IS theories and theorizing
- Gain philosophical insights from other disciplines such as the humanities, linguistics, architecture and design and the aesthetics.
- Provide philosophical reflections on increasingly complex and intractable questions in the ethics of IS, privacy and security that, in many cases, cannot be addressed by empirical science
- Integrate with historical analyses, deriving philosophical insights evidenced in history

In sum, the Communications of the Association for Information Systems offers this department as an open channel for "new thinkers," revolutionaries and inquisitive writers who see a bright future in the IS field.

Submission Instructions

Before submitting, assess the paper with regard to its historical and philosophical content to determine whether it is appropriate to be published in this department. If necessary, forward any queries to the department editor with an abstract (not the full paper) to confirm suitability. Authors must submit via the CAIS ScholarOne site (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cais) and choose the "History of Information Systems" Department. The submission should be accompanied by a cover letter that includes the background and motivation of the research along with 2-3 potential reviewers for the paper. The department editor will be the default Associate Editor for submissions, but authors have the right to provide alternative suggestions where applicable in their cover letter.