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# Health information portals: How can we improve the user's search experience?

S. Alter

R. Halonen

B. Niehaves

M. Sein

C. Urquhart

*See next page for additional authors*

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**Authors**

S. Alter, R. Halonen, B. Niehaves, M. Sein, C. Urquhart, and P. Zhang

## **WHY DO WE TOIL? Research at the cost of practice or vice versa?**

The theme of the panel is the relative emphasis of research or practice in IS research. The panel will contribute to the reflection on research ethics by stimulating discussion on whether IS studies are carried out to further the discipline or to improve practice.

The target audience includes researchers and practitioners who are interested in balancing research and practice perspectives. The audience will get new insights on the debate of bridging between research and practice and presumably also consolidation on their own thoughts. Specifically, we are interested in dialogue with researchers who work in close interaction with practice, such as individuals involved in action research, design science research, system development as well as behavioural research. The discussion will also offer a platform to sort through preferences between practice and research, and to express views of their necessity or insignificance (“Does the end justify the means?”).

The panel is intended to be interactive from the very beginning. There will be no presentations; instead, the format will be dialogue within the panel, and between the panel and the audience.

### **Panellists & Chairs**

**Panellist:** Steven Alter, Professor, School of Business and Management, San Francisco, CA

*There is no contradiction between research and practice. Instead, there are disagreements about the importance of links between research and practice. Relevant challenges include explaining why particular research topics are or are not relevant to practice, explaining why particular practical concerns are or are not interesting topics for research, and finding ways to bridge the gap between the "academic research paper" genre that fits with traditional peer reviewed academic publishing and the "practitioner publication" genre that is understandable and palatable for practitioner audiences.*

**Panellist:** Maung Sein, Professor, University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway

*Research has an impact on practice but it happens subtly and through a stream or body of work rather than individual studies. Scientific knowledge and practice knowledge are not necessarily different. We should reward research on interesting and innovative issues and not get too caught up on methodological “purity”.*

**Panellist:** Cathy Urquhart, Senior Lecturer, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

*At stake is our link with practice; to what extent are we a discipline embedded in practice? There are a number of models, from the arts through to science. Methods make a difference; grounded theory is strongly bound to the data and what happens in practice; design science produces artefacts that link research and practice.*

**Panellist:** Ping Zhang, Professor, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

*Different types of research can have different types of values and implications over different periods of time and at different intellectual levels. Both theoretically rigorous research and innovation driven research are important, so are both research with strong practical implications and research with less practical implications but may be rich in the intellectual development.*

**Co-Chair:** Raija Halonen, Postdoctoral Fellow, CISC, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland  
*Raija's background is in industry where she started her IS career with a failed IS implementation for factory workers. Later, after her doctoral studies in the University of Oulu, Finland, her interests have focused on social dynamics in IS projects.*

**Co-Chair:** Bjoern Niehaves, Assistant Professor, ERCIS, Münster, Germany

*Björn is CES-Visiting Researcher at Harvard University, Cambridge/MA, and Assistant Professor at the European Research Center for Information Systems (ERCIS). His research interests revolve around philosophy of design science, research-practice-collaboration, business process management, electronic government, and ICT & aging.*