Abstract

Identifying societal impact of academic research output has been of great interest to research communities, funding organizations, and public in general. In this study, we take the first step to explore the impact of academic research in Information Systems (IS) on informing policy. In particular, we empirically investigate how policy related documents cite scholarly work published in any one of the top eight IS journals recognized by Association of Information Systems (AIS) Senior Scholars’ Basket of Journals (basket of eight).

Using a large-scale dataset from Crossref (www.crossref.org) and Web of Science (www.webofknowledge.com) for articles and Altmetric (www.altmetric.com) covering tens of thousands of policy documents, we identify more than 50 policy documents referring to articles published in one of the journals in the basket. This collection of policy documents and research articles are then used to answer basic but important questions about the nature of the relation between the two. For example, what policy document sources (publication outlets) cite IS publication most often? How long, on average, does it take for an IS publication to be cited by policy documents? In addition to the basic exploratory analysis, the authors manually classify the research articles, the policy documents, and the individual citations, based on different criteria, in order to provide a more in depth understanding of IS research impact on policy. The following four questions are answered using the manual classification.

- What are the topics of policy documents citing IS research? Examples of such policy topics are healthcare policy, intellectual property policy, and trade policy. Similarly, what are the topics of the IS research articles being cited by the policy documents?
- What types of policy changes the documents are intended for? Examples of such policy types are distributive, redistributive, regulatory and constituent (Lowi, 1972).
- What are the types of the citation from policy documents to IS research? Citations could be, for example, simply reporting the cited document, or supporting a claim based on the cited research. A more detailed classification of citation types (Bornmann, 2013) are also considered.

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first work to empirically investigate how IS research is being cited by policy related documents. We hope that the findings help IS research community by demonstrating the impact of their work on informing policy.

References
