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INTRODUCTION: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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For the eighth year of AMCIS the Philosophical Foundations of Information Systems (PFIS) AMCIS Minitrack also celebrates its eighth year. PFIS began its inaugural AMCIS appearance as a Panel discussion entitled "Philosophy as a Reference Discipline for MIS" chaired by James F. Courtney with a healthy audience of some sixty people. The Panel members were John Haynes, Rudi Hirschheim, William Hodges and Jaana Porra. In 1994 PFIS made its debut at the Decision Sciences Institute Conference in Hawaii led by James F. Courtney with founding papers by John Haynes, William Hodges and Jaana Porra. In those nine years over 200 papers have been submitted to PFIS. This year continues that trend with twenty papers submitted and eighteen papers accepted for conference presentation and publication in the proceedings.

The objective of PFIS is to explore how philosophy has been used as a reference discipline in the past, and to foster the development of a "philosophy of information technology." The continuing explosion of information technology in forms such as the World Wide Web and commercial information services is leading to an intrusion of information technology into our personal and business lives at a scope only imagined just a few years ago. Understanding and managing the implications of this technology seems to be a vital issue, not only for scholars of IS, but for humanity as a whole. It seems appropriate that we turn to philosophy as a way of understanding these issues in IS.

PFIS 2002 is divided into five sessions. Session 1 covers issues of "Perspectives and Information Systems" with four papers elucidating "Integral Perspectives," "Multiple Perspectives," "Defining Perspectives" and "Stakeholder Analysis by Perspectival Thinking." Session Two provides for IS and "Hermeneutics and Phenomenology" with three papers on "Validity Issues in Phenomenological Research," "Hermeneutic Philosophy and Data Collection" and "Churchman, Heidegger and Phenomenology." Session Three deals with IS aspects of "Churchman, Kant and Institutional Theory" in the form of three papers on "Performance and Role Play in Churchmanian Design Systems," "A Kantian Foundation of IS Research" and "Institutional Theory." Session Four examines "The Discipline of IS and Issues of Legality, Rigor and Vagueness" from the following four paper perspectives, "Philosophical, Legal and Business," "Rigor, Relevance and Research Paradigms," "Vagueness in Language" and "The Discipline of IS – issues and challenges." Session Five draws the issues in "Philosophy of Science, Context, Relationship and Value Creation" out of four papers on "Paradigmatic Changes in Software Development," "The Context of Information Technology and Electronic Commerce," "The Relationship in Customer Relationship Management" and "IT Investment and Value Creation."