Introduction to the HICSS-50 Minitrack on Practice-based IS Research

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The debate over rigor and relevance has extended many decades with rigor leading the way in the overwhelming majority of our academic journals where theory contribution and methodological excellence transcend any practical implication the research may have. Practice-based research aspires to bridge the gap between academic theory and practice; it aspires both to introduce researchers to state of the art practices and issues from industry as well as introduce managers to research that makes sense of and brings coherence to the issues they face. The methods used in practice-based research are often exploratory, field-based studies involving interviews, observations, and/or descriptive surveys. The intense pressure to achieve methodological distinction and theoretical contribution often results in very current practice-based topics being eschewed by researchers, because the topics themselves are not mature enough in practice to achieve desirable samples or sample sizes, nor are they conducive to theorizing since so little is known. These are precisely the reasons that exploratory, practice-based research can play a tremendous role in helping establish and lay the foundations of a research domain while providing insights into an emerging topic. This year, our track received 24 submissions of which we accepted 10 for presentation. The topics range from perennial issues such as IS security and outsourcing to novel ones, such as blockchain technology, digital strategy and bi-modal IT.

Based on the paper "So You Want to go Digital? How to Avoid the Next Legacy Platform Debacle" by Martin Mocker and John Boochever, the first presentation seeks to help IT managers reduce the complexity of their IT platforms so as to create a foundation for digitized procsesses and products. Based on data from over 75 interviews and more than 100 consulting projects, the authors identify key drivers of digital platform complexity and propose how companies can address these drivers in order to avoid the next generation of legacy platforms. The second presentation discusses the exciting emergence of blockchain. Authors Roman Beck and Christoph Müller-Bloch will present their paper, "Blockchain as Radical Innovation: A Framework for Engaging with Distributed Ledgers as Incumbent Organization." This work presents a case study of how one large bank is responding to the advent of blockchain. The authors provide insight on the organizational challenges facing firms as they engage with blockchain and provide a blueprint for practitioners in their endeavor to embrace blockchain technology. The third and final presentation of the first session features the work of authors Mark David McLaughlin and Janis Gogan who reviewed almost 100 information security studies published in IS journals over a 10-year period with a view towards uncovering lessons for practice on preventing, preparing for, detecting, and responding to information security threats. While most reviews have as a goal to advance theory, this review seeks to advance the practice of IS security. The paper upon which the presentation is based is titled, "InfoSec Research in Prominent IS Journals: Findings and Implications for the CIO and Board of Directors."

Our second session also features three papers, the first two of which discuss bi-modal IT. In their paper, "Increasing the Agility of IT Delivery: Five Types of Bimodal IT Organization,", authors Bettina Horlach, Paul Drews, Ingrid Schirmer, and Tilo Boehmann address the way in which companies are seeking to increase the agility and speed of IT delivery by adopting a bimodal IT organization. Based on data gathered across nine companies, the authors identify five different types of bimodal IT. On the basis of similarities and differences among the types, the authors propose future research on bimodal IT and derive implications for practice. The second bi-modal presenation features the work of Ingmar Haffke, Bradley Kalgovas, Alexander Benlian from their paper, "The Transformative Role of Bimodal IT in an Era of Digital Business." This presentation also

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draws its insights from qualitative data, namely from interviews in 19 organizations with the CIO and one other executive from the business side. The authors found three distinct archetypes of bimodal IT design. The authors describe the three approaches and the implications for how the IT function operates in the current era of digitalization. The final presentation of the second session is based on the paper, "Connecting Industry: Building and Sustaining a Practice-based Research Community" by Susan Williams and Petra Schubert. The authors will share their experience in building and sustaining a multi-organization practice-based research community (IndustryConnect). The authors will share the motivations and theoretical foundations behind the initiative. They will provide insights for other academics interested in developing a community with practitioners.

Our third session features four presentations. The first presentation, based on the paper "Mitigating the threat of lost knowledge within information technology departments ," by Jesse Shumaker, Kerry Ward, Stacie Petter, and Jennifer Riley presents the use of a knowledge loss assessment tool to help an IT department identify important knowledge holders whose skills need to be transferred to other IT employees before retirement. The second presentation, based on the work of Sara Cullen, Graeme Shanks, Michael Davern, and Leslie Willcocks in their paper, "A Framework for Relationships in Outsourcing: Contract Management Archetypes ," will propose how behavioral approaches can be more successful than contractual techniques in creating a successful outsourcing engagement. The third presentation, based on the paper "Transforming the Workplace: Unified Communications & Collaboration Usage Patterns in a Large Automotive Manufacturer" provides insights from the implementation of Unifed Communications and Collaboration (UC&C) at General Motors. Authors Anthony Bolton, Meg Murray, and Joy Fluker describe how the integration of multiple communication channels and collaboration technologies offers the possibility to tranform the workplace. The final presentation contrasts nicely with the preceding one in that it presents the case of a very small software organization, with a view toward understanding how successful dynamic capabilities at the company level can affect project management in small software companies. This presentation is based on the paper "Dynamic Capabilities and Project Management in Small Software Firms" by Jacob Nørbjerg, Peter Axel Nielsen, and John Stouby Persson.