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**A BRIEF HISTORY OF
THE MIS RESEARCH COMMUNITY:
ACCOMPLISHMENTS,
DISAPPOINTMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES**

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As an academic field, Management Information Systems (MIS) has been in existence for about 30 years. In the first decade, the major challenge was to define this field by developing curricula for its undergraduate and graduate programs. The realization that MIS had to also establish itself as a research community became evident as its success, measured in terms of the proliferation of MIS educational programs, was accompanied by criticisms from those outside the field who challenged the "scientific" legitimacy of the discipline. In the late 1970's, the MIS Quarterly and the International Conference on Information Systems were two new initiatives intended to both showcase the work of MIS researchers and to disseminate exemplars of good work to the rest of the community.

In the 1980's there was a sharp increase in the number of MIS doctoral programs. Many universities put together MIS academic research groups. The focus was on how to conduct research well. Borrowing theories and methods from reference disciplines became the accepted norm. Academic papers by MIS academics criticized fellow members of the community for not adhering to the state-of-the-art practices of reference disciplines and proceeded to educate them on how to do so. Also during this decade, several debates on the nature of legitimate MIS research began as various groups, including non-positivists, who felt that they were being excluded from the mainstream literature argued for a fair share of publication outlets to disseminate their work.

In spite of the accomplishments of the first 25 years, in terms of the number of MIS academics, doctoral programs, academic conferences, publications outlets available and quality of research work, there is still a sense of dissatisfaction and unease in the MIS community. Some feel that the pluralistic view of MIS research will eventually lead to a disintegration of the field. Others are concerned about the still sceptical view of other academics in business schools towards MIS research. The talk will go into whether or not these problems are ones we should all be concerned about, and will seek audience participation in terms of what possible solutions there are to solve them.