

Association for Information Systems AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

ECIS 2008 Proceedings

European Conference on Information Systems
(ECIS)

2008

Panel: Cricket or Baseball?

Robert Galliers
Bentley College

Richard Baskerville
Georgia State University, baskerville@gsu.edu

K Lyytinen
Case Western Reserve University

Cathy Urquhart
University of Auckland, c.urquhart@auckland.ac.nz

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2008>

Recommended Citation

Galliers, Robert; Baskerville, Richard; Lyytinen, K; and Urquhart, Cathy, "Panel: Cricket or Baseball?" (2008). *ECIS 2008 Proceedings*. 127.
<http://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2008/127>

This material is brought to you by the European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in ECIS 2008 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

Cricket or Baseball?

Bob Galliers, Bentley College, USA

Richard Baskerville, Georgia State University, USA

Kalle Lyytinen, Case Western Reserve University, USA

Cathy Urquhart, University of Auckland Business School, New Zealand

Brian Fitzgerald, University of Limerick, Ireland

Outline

In a recent *EJIS* opinion piece – “Why the old world cannot publish” – four respected IS academics opined why it is that “the European publication record is disappointing” (Lyytinen, *et al.*, 2007). They “propose several constructive reasons” for this state of affairs. These include: a “lack of appreciation” of journal articles, “weak publishing cultures”, and “inadequate PhD preparation”, amongst others. The authors were deliberately controversial in raising these issues, and so is this panel, which will take the form of a debate. The aim is to build on the ECIS panel of last year, from which the *EJIS* opinion piece emerged, with a view to adding new insights into what Galliers & Meadows (2003) called a “discipline divided”. The intention is not to privilege one tradition above another, but to point out their distinctive characteristics, and to argue for diversity in IS research. We may argue whether cricket is preferable to baseball, or vice versa, but it is too simplistic to form a debate about the new and the old. Cricket may have developed in the old world, but parts of the new world excel in it. Baseball may be played in part of the new world, but an ancient part of Asia has taken it to heart. Things are more complex in the age of ‘globality’ (Beck, 2000).

The panel is made up of two of the authors of the *EJIS* article; two AIS Vice Presidents, and former AIS presidents. First, we shall start with the authors of the *EJIS* piece, who will expand on their arguments. We then turn to neither a European nor a North American perspective before returning to perspectives from either side of the Atlantic.

Stances

Richard Baskerville will point to what he perceives as an increasing tendency in Europe to compete with North American research productivity on North American terms. The name of this game – let’s call it baseball – is tallying the number of published articles in highly ranked journals that tend to emanate from North America. Among the points made in the *EJIS* article is that, if this is going to be the game, the European research traditions (culture, training, etc.) are going to be a handicap. Don’t prepare for baseball by cricket training in other words. You can’t expect experienced cricket players to teach rookies how to play big league baseball. From Baskerville’s perspective, the *EJIS* article highlights the results of the early stages of European efforts to play baseball with the rules of cricket in mind.

Kalle Lyytinen will come to the debate as a European and a European trained scholar who is really concerned about the future of IS and its role in Europe. For him, it is not a question of ‘new world’ versus ‘old world’, despite the title of the *EJIS* article, but rather “Why the ‘old

world' cannot see that our agenda should not be about the 'new world'". We should not be arguing about qualitative research versus quantitative research, or any paradigmatic position, or inclusion versus exclusion. Rather, he asks whether it makes sense for European IS to even try to build North American style research competence, and whether our logic in attaining such research competence is appropriate. In other words, what is the nature and ambition of IS research in Europe?

Cathy Urquhart will take a different stance by discussing the issue of publication from the perspective of coming from neither the 'new world' of North America or from the 'old world' of Europe, and from the perspective of having been involved in the editing processes of a range of different journals. She will discuss the publication game from the perspective of social inclusion. Social inclusion is defined as "participation in the determination of both individual and collective life chances" (Stewart, 2000). There is more to social inclusion than equal access to resources: individuals may be excluded because of discrimination based on gender, race, sexual preference, disability, or political persecution (Warschauer, 2003).

Brian Fitzgerald will argue that 'new world' versus 'old world', or Europe versus 'new world', is not a recognisable or automatic dichotomy in other disciplines. Why should it be thus in IS? Such a dichotomy is self-fulfilling in that people taking such a stance will tend to believe that one camp produces 'better' research. He will argue that neither side has a monopoly on good or bad research, and that it is more to do with formulaic genres than substantive differences.

Bob Galliers will reflect on the anatomy and multi-faceted nature of European IS research (Avgerou, *et al.*, 1999; Galliers & Whitley, 2007; Whitley & Galliers, 2007). His approach will be to argue for diversity in the ever expanding universe of the IS field. The rules of the baseball game in North America may lead to certain conclusions about what is 'high impact' IS research, but different rules may apply in other parts of the world, where cricket is king, and even where it isn't. Baseball's world champions (*sic.*), by definition, come from North America, and so it is too with American football. There is little to be gained from playing to someone else's rules.

References

- Avgerou C, Siemer, J & Bjorn-Andersen N (1999). The academic field of Information Systems in Europe, *European Journal of Information Systems*, 8(2), 136-153.
- Beck, U (2000). *What is Globalization?* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Galliers R D & Meadows M (2003). A discipline divided: globalization and parochialism in Information Systems research, *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 11: 108-117.
- Galliers R D & Whitley E A (2007). "Vive les differences? Developing a profile of European Information Systems research as a basis for international comparisons", *European Journal of Information Systems*, 16(1), 20-35.
- Lyytinen K, Baskerville, R, Iivari, J & Te'eni, D (2007). Why the old world cannot publish? Overcoming challenges in publishing high-impact IS research, *European Journal of Information Systems*, 16(4), 317-326.
- Stewart A (2000). *Social Inclusion: An Introduction*, in *Social Inclusion: Possibilities and Tensions*, P Askonas & A Stewart (eds.), Houndmills England: Macmillan, 1-16.
- Warschauer M (2003). *Social Inclusion and Technology*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press.

Whitley E A & Galliers R D (2007). An alternative perspective on citation classics: Evidence from the first ten years of the European Conference on Information Systems, *Information & Management*, 44(5), 441-455.

The panelists

Richard Baskerville's research and authored works regard security of information systems, methods of information systems design and development, and the interaction of information systems and organizations. He is editor-in-chief of the *European Journal of Information Systems*, a Chartered Engineer, holds a B.S., summa cum laude, from The University of Maryland, and the M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from The London School of Economics, University of London.

Kalle Lyytinen is Iris S. Wolstein Professor at Case Western Reserve University, USA, adjunct professor at University of Jyväskylä, Finland, and visiting professor at University of Loughborough U.K. Currently, he serves on the editorial boards of several leading information systems and requirements engineering journals including *Journal of AIS* (Editor-in-Chief), *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *Information & Organization*, *Requirements Engineering Journal*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems*, and *Information Technology and People*, among others. He is AIS fellow (2004), and the former chairperson of IFIP 8.2 and a founding member of SIGSAND. He also led the research team that developed and implemented MetaEdit+ which is the leading domain modeling and metaCASE platform globally. He has published over 180 scientific articles and conference papers and edited or written eleven books on topics related to nature of IS discipline, system design, method engineering, organizational implementation, risk assessment, computer supported cooperative work, standardization, and ubiquitous computing. He is currently involved in research projects that looks at the IT induced radical innovation in software development, IT innovation in architecture, engineering and construction industry, requirements discovery and modeling for large scale systems, and the adoption of broadband wireless services in the U.K., South Korea and the U.S.

Cathy Urquhart is a senior lecturer in Information Systems at the University of Auckland Business School, New Zealand. She has been an Associate Editor for *Information Technology and People* and is currently an Associate Editor for *Information Technology for Development*. She was recently voted one of *MIS Quarterly's* 'Most Developmental' Associate Editors. She is Vice President for Special Interest Groups and Member Services for the AIS.

Brian Fitzgerald holds an endowed professorship, the *Frederick A Krehbiel II Chair in Innovation in Global Business & Technology*, at the University of Limerick, Ireland, where he is also Director of the Lero Graduate School in Software Engineering (LGSSE). His publications include ten books, and more than 100 papers in leading international journals and conferences in both the information systems and software engineering fields. Having worked in industry prior to taking up an academic position, he has more than 20 years' experience in the software field.

Bob Galliers is Provost of Bentley College, USA. Formerly with the London School of Economics and Warwick Business School, UK, and Curtin University, Australia, he is editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* and a member of several editorial boards. He has published in many IS journals and has a number of books to his name, the most recent being the

co-authored *Exploring Information Systems Research Approaches* (Routledge, 2007), the third edition of *Strategic Information Management* (Butterworth Heinemann, 2003), and *Rethinking MIS* (Oxford University Press, 1999). He is a Fellow and former president of the AIS. He has an AB honors degree in Economics from Harvard University; an MA with distinction in Systems in Management from Lancaster University; a PhD in Information Systems from the London School of Economics, and a DSc, honoris causa, from Turku School of Economics & Business Administration, Finland. He is a Visiting Professor at the LSE and Brunel University, UK and the University of New South Wales, Australia.