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# Panel: Business Informatics in Common Europe

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## BUSINESS INFORMATICS IN COMMON EUROPE

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Rapid changes in recent years and demands for more applied and professionally orientated education for information systems necessitate constant evaluation and modification of education programmes. At the same time claims that IT is no longer a source of strategic advantage have generated a growing concern over the loss of technology-orientated jobs and an increasing emphasis on business-orientated IT jobs. Nevertheless, study programmes related to Information Systems are diverse and often controversial, although attempts have been made to develop frameworks for Information Systems and to provide reference curricula – for instance the *MSIS 2000 / IS2002 – Model curriculum and guidelines for graduate degree programs in Information Systems*. Frequent discussions about the core subjects emerge, emphasizing different aspects and reflecting the broad range of backgrounds of participating faculty. For instance an extensive discussion in 2004 on the ISWorld mailing list ([www.isworld.org](http://www.isworld.org)), with about 100 contributions concerning the importance of programming in the Information System curriculum, demonstrates the diversity of the discipline.

In some discussions it seems that the Information Systems curriculum should include many (if not all) related subjects ranging from Business and Information System Strategy to Management and Marketing, Organisational Concepts, Modelling and Information System Architecture, Programming, Mathematics, Statistics and Operations Research as well as Computing, Networking and Communication Technologies. In addition the complaint regularly heard from practitioners is that university educators do not prepare their students adequately for the demands of business organisations. Sometimes it seems that information systems graduates are expected to be the “all-in-one person solution” suitable for every IS/IT related problem, and thus a clear identity of the Information Systems discipline is still missing. Consequently many universities struggle with the proper direction and design of Information Systems related curriculum.

On closer examination there are indications that the controversy is often due to two complementary but fundamentally different streams in Information Systems, with on the one hand a technology-, engineering- and method-orientated perspective and on the other a business- and management-orientated focus. In addition, a different emphasis in Information Systems-related degrees is observed between the Anglo-American Information Systems community, with an emphasis on management aspects, and the Business Informatics community in continental Europe with an emphasis on Information Systems Engineering.

The Bologna agreement, with the aim of stimulating a common European education area, and the increasing pressure to offer attractive and profitable study programmes, have increased the demand for a thorough debate on IS study programmes. Schools with traditional computing degree programmes might develop variations of IT programmes, and business schools offer various types of Management Information Systems courses. Established study programmes and career paths of information system graduates might have to be modified or enhanced, and thus at present universities are challenged in the design of adequate study programmes.

The objective of this panel is to discuss different views of the discipline and identify the importance of core subjects (content), teaching mode and research topics from a Management, Information Systems and Informatics perspective. We aim to identify the grand challenges related to business informatics in common Europe and provide guidelines for information systems and business informatics curriculum development.

The panel discussion concentrates on grand challenges in common Europe concerning education in Business Informatics. We invite panellists from Europe with different backgrounds and discuss the importance of core subjects, teaching mode and research topics within the discipline from a Management, Information Systems and Informatics perspective. To initiate a panel discussion with high level of interaction and discussion among the participants, each panellist will present his/her perspective on Information Systems. We intend to structure the discussion along the following framework.