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Embarking on Information Systems' Voyage to Self-Discovery: Identifying the Core of the Discipline

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EMBARKING ON INFORMATION SYSTEMS' VOYAGE TO SELF-DISCOVERY: IDENTIFYING THE CORE OF THE DISCIPLINE

Chair: **Elena Karahanna**, University of Georgia

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Abstract

In an academically competitive environment where other disciplines research IS-related phenomena, survival of the IS field hinges upon its ability to distinguish itself and provide insights that other disciplines are not poised to provide. We have survived as a distinctive field partly because of our superior understanding and knowledge of information systems, and because we are often the first at the scene for a new information technology. Problems, however, are not waiting for IS to solve them exclusively. Other disciplines can step in and unravel them if we don't. Discerning the core that defines the IS field, clarifying what makes the IS field unique, isolating the phenomena in which we have a competitive advantage vis-à-vis other disciplines, and identifying the areas where our understanding of a phenomenon is far superior to that of other disciplines would enhance the long-term viability and visibility of the IS discipline. The panelists explore various methods of identifying the core IS constructs and relationships that define their foundation of a theory of IS, argue why their starting point is an appropriate foundation for a theory of IS, discuss the next steps in elaboration of their theory, and identify critical studies to falsify or support their emerging theory.