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Generative mechanisms for innovation in information infrastructures

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IS PhD research in the 21st century – A tale of Candidates and Supervisors

Focus of Panel: Panel Topic, What Will Be Learnt and Target Audience:
In the 21st century, PhD research has become one of the cornerstones of the development of the field of Information Systems. On the one hand, a significant proportion of published research originates from the Doctoral work of new researchers seeking tenure, and on the other hand, established researchers cannot progress unless they are successful supervisors. Institutions are also important players in this game, as they seek to have the most buoyant and superior funded PhD programmes. At the top of the research food chain, governments and international agencies also play their part in providing incentives to develop PhD research.

Against this backdrop of sometimes conflicting pressures, one critical element is at risk of getting neglected: the sacrosanct relationship between candidates and their supervisors. This justifies why our theme: PhD research in the 21st century is both incredibly important and extremely difficult. This panel will seek to provide practical answers to many of the questions raised by the execution of excellent PhD research in today's environment. It will be of great interest to all researchers involved in supervision, to staff who are in charge of designing and administering PhD research in their institutions, and finally, to current and would-be PhD candidates wondering what kind of PhD research they want to carry out.

Panel Members:
Chairperson: *Ralph Sprague* (University of Hawai'i at Manoa, USA) will take a neutral stance and ensure that, beyond the issues of PhD supervision, the needs of IS research is being discussed by the panellists.
Christina Keller (PhD in 2007 from a national research school, now in Jönköping University and Uppsala University, Sweden), *Daniel Moody* (PhD in 2002 from the University of Melbourne, now in University of Twente, the Netherlands) and *David Sammon* (PhD in 2007 from the National University of Ireland, now in University College Cork, Ireland), will contribute to the debate from the point of view of a PhD candidate, taking a longitudinal view of their experience including the post-PhD stage of transition from student to researcher.
Frederic Adam (University College Cork, Ireland), *Sven Carlsson* (Lund University, Sweden) and *Graeme Shanks* (University of Melbourne, Australia) will contribute to the debate from the point of view of a supervisor in traditional PhD programmes, in structured PhD programmes and national research schools. Graeme will also provide an additional perspective from the point of view of the Head of Department.

Panel Structure:
The panel is primarily characterised by a dialogue between candidates, their supervisors and the audience, under the guidance of the Chairperson, It will seek to provide answers to specific issues that have been identified in advance, such as:
- Considering where candidates, topic and funding come from
- Mechanisms to ensure that the supervisor/student partnership is appropriate.
- Mechanisms to measure the student's particular needs and support them.
- Reasonable expectations of the supervisor/student relationship.
- Ideal process of PhD writing.
- Mechanisms for getting students involved in the life ("culture") of the department.
- Processes for enabling students to be "socialised" into the IS research community.
- Steps taken by the supervisor to inspire and motivate the student.
- How supervisors can take interest in post-doc activities; future career options, etc...
- Level of participation of supervisor in thesis writing.
- Expectations for PhD Funding.
- Time for completion/duration of PhD research.
- National research schools versus local PhD programmes.