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WHY I RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR PAPER BE ACCEPTED: CONVERSATIONS WITH IS JOURNAL EDITORS

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PANEL 6

WHY I RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR PAPER BE ACCEPTED: CONVERSATIONS WITH IS JOURNAL EDITORS

Panel Chair: **Mary J. Culnan**, Georgetown University, USA

Panelists: **Robert W. Zmud**, Florida State University, USA
E. Burton Swanson, University of California, Los Angeles, USA
Jonathan Liebenau, London School of Economics, UK

What makes a paper publishable in a leading IS journal? What important research topics are not reflected by current submissions? How do the leading journals which publish IS research differ from one another and what are the implications of these differences for IS researchers? Are there common flaws which characterize papers which are not accepted and what can authors do to overcome these problems? The purpose of this panel is to allow ICIS participants to explore these and other questions through an open dialogue with editors of some of the leading information systems journals.

The format of the panel will be highly interactive. After each of the three panelists makes a brief opening statement, the remainder of the session will be spent addressing questions from the audience. To ensure that the questions cover a wide range of topics, members of the audience will be asked submit questions in writing to the panel chair at the beginning of the session, rather than having questions taken from the floor.

The panelists represent both North American and European perspectives and collectively have editorial experience with most of the leading IS journals. Currently, Bob Zmud is a Senior Editor of *Organization Science*; Burt Swanson is Editor-in-Chief of *Information Systems Research*, and Jonathan Liebenau is an Editor of the *European Journal of Information Systems*.

PANEL 7

INNOVATIVE DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES IN MIS RESEARCH: NEW WAYS TO APPROACH OLD PROBLEMS

Panel Chair: **Ronald L. Thompson**, University of Vermont, USA

Panelists: **Christopher Higgins**, University of Western Ontario, Canada
Sirkka Jarvenpaa, University of Texas at Austin, USA

An examination of MIS research articles from top journals provides evidence that a majority of projects rely on a small number of data collection methods. This places restrictions on the type of phenomena which can be investigated and constrains the information that can be obtained from research efforts. The potential benefits of exploring and using different techniques, in addition to the more standard ones, are many. New and important issues may be discovered, new insights may be obtained into old issues, and in general the entire process and outcomes of MIS research may be enhanced.

There are many barriers to change, however. Two researchers[1] from a referent discipline offer these common reasons, which seem to apply here as well:

1. People do what they know.
2. People do what they have done.
3. People do what is efficient (easier?).
4. People do what is rewarded.

Many data collection efforts are designed to confirm preconceived propositions, rather than to challenge or explore new discoveries. By expanding our definition of data to include what has been termed "unofficial" data, we may expand opportunities to make new discoveries. Closely related to the collection of data is the development of measurement scales. Here again opportunities exist to try new ways of developing scales that have the potential to provide better measures of our constructs. The use of secondary data collection techniques also opens many new possibilities, but secondary data is seldom employed in MIS research. When standard methods such as questionnaires *are* employed, opportunities exist to use information technology to increase the efficiency of data collection. The use of a different method or mode of data collection raises additional concerns, however, including the potential for bias in the responses. Use of IT for data collection may also raise ethical concerns, such as research agendas that are hidden from the respondent.

To provide more focus for discussion, a common research topic will be addressed. Specifically, the research questions of interest are:

1. What skills and attributes are currently important for systems analysts?
2. Has the relative importance of different skills and attributes changed over time?

The panel chair will introduce the topics of alternative data collection methods and "unofficial" data and solicit suggestions for alternative methods from the audience. Chris Higgins will then introduce the **act frequency** approach to developing behavioral measurement scales, and describe how the approach has been used to develop measures for one specific construct. Ron Thompson will demonstrate a **diskette-based questionnaire** and discuss some of the costs and benefits of their use. Sirkka Jarvenpaa will follow with a brief discussion of **secondary data collection** techniques and describe one technique which would be appropriate for the sample research project.

The panelists and chair will then argue the merits and demerits of different approaches before opening the panel to discussion and comments from the audience.

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[1]P. M. Podsakoff and D. R. Dalton, "Research Methodology in Organizational Studies," *Journal of Management*, Volume 13, Number 2, 1989, pp. 419-441.