

Association for Information Systems AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

ICIS 1991 Proceedings

International Conference on Information Systems
(ICIS)

1991

INFORMATION SYSTEMS RESEARCH IN EUROPE: THREE SURVEYS

Kalle Lyytinen

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis1991>

Recommended Citation

Lyytinen, Kalle, "INFORMATION SYSTEMS RESEARCH IN EUROPE: THREE SURVEYS" (1991). *ICIS 1991 Proceedings*. 28.
<http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis1991/28>

This material is brought to you by the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in ICIS 1991 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.



* N E W D O C *

PANEL 16
INFORMATION SYSTEMS RESEARCH IN
EUROPE: THREE SURVEYS

Panel Chair: Kalle Lyytinen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Panelists: Niels Bjørn-Andersen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
W. A. Scheer, University of Saarland, Germany

(1) Overview of Information Systems Research in Europe. Kalle Lyytinen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This presentation will provide an introduction to European academic work in information systems in general and review institutional issues of various kinds. The survey will cover the structure of the European research institutions and graduate teaching. It will explain how the European academic community is divided into schools of thought, each with different teaching and research traditions. Issues such as scale factors, the geographic dispersal of universities, the approach to business education, and the audiences for information systems teaching and research all affect the character of IS research. The presentation will also comment on the development of a new range of journals and conferences which are working to bring together the European academic community. On the individual level, too, information systems research is affected by career structures and incentives which not only differ radically from that in North America, but also vary within Europe. For these, and other institutional reasons, the mix of research topics and research strategies tends to be different, with more connection to mainstream social science disciplines than to business schools.

Finally, the effects of Europe as an institution itself, through the European Community, will be considered. The research needs and opportunities which arise out of the imminent political integration (on a number of fronts) must be considered. This has affected not only the politics of European institutions, including businesses and universities, it has also affected funding.

(2) Organizational Forms and Information Systems. Niels Bjørn-Andersen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

This presentation further develops the theme of the differences between European and North America commercial and administrative structures. In some European research traditions, issues of organization design are not separated from issues of information systems design. Hence, this survey will focus on European research on organizational design and its implications for information system design.

The European legal system, particularly with respect to practices in areas such as industrial relations, is also substantially different from that of the US. In order to take factors such as these into account, European researchers have advocated that the design and introduction of information technology include the consideration of human and social factors through such approaches as socio-technical design and industrial democracy. The survey will also review these traditions.

(3) Systems Development Process Research. W. A. Scheer, University of Saarland, Saarbrücken, Germany

In Europe, IS research has been much occupied by the study of the systems development process. Since the mid-1960s, this area has generated a substantial interest among European academics, especially those in Northern Europe and Scandinavia. They have used a combination of research and presentational approaches which are different from those in North America. This survey will focus on European research into the methods and tools of the systems development process and discuss how contextual factors have affected European research in the systems development process.

IS researchers in Europe have also focused on the development of prototype systems. This approach has been tried in several areas including Computer Integrated Manufacturing using expert systems and object oriented approaches. The European approaches to prototyping will also be explored in this survey.

PANEL 17

A DEBATE WITH THE AUDIENCE ON IS RESEARCH STRATEGIES: CAN NORTH AMERICA LEARN ANYTHING FROM EUROPEAN RESEARCH?

Panel Chair: Gunter Schaefer, European Community, France

Panelists: David Avison, University of Southampton, UK
Richard Boland, Case Western Reserve University, USA
Helmut Krcmar, University of Hohenheim, Germany
Lars Mathiassen, Aalborg University, Denmark

This session has been given an intentionally provocative title in order to challenge the audience to help us find opportunities for significant exchange and improvement in research strategies on both sides of the Atlantic. It is our underlying assumption that cultural and economic contexts shape substantially both European and North American research, making them very different. We also assume that recognizing and understanding these differences is a precondition for improvement in IS research. Not enough attention is paid to European work in North America (and vice versa, to a lesser extent), and this is to the detriment of the entire research community. The agenda for this section will be a debate that will cover the following areas:

- differences in research disciplines and institutional boundaries
- differences in research styles and traditions
- differences in reference disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, and literature
- differences in theory and practice (non-positivist and anti-positivist approaches)
- how these differences can be used to improve the research on both sides of the Atlantic.

Active audience participation is solicited for this session.