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Editorial Statement: Information Systems and Health Care Department

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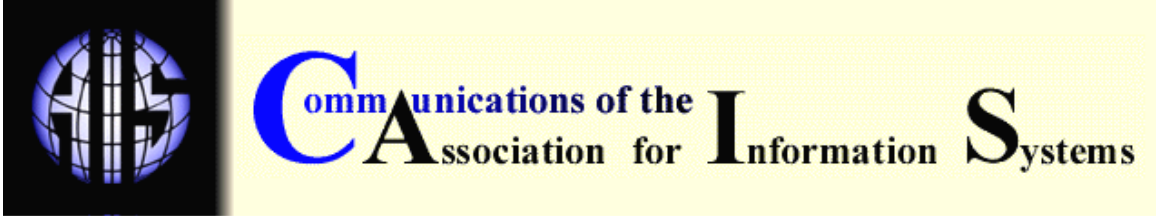
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EDITORIAL STATEMENT: INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND HEALTHCARE DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the Information Systems and Healthcare Department of CAIS. The new department focuses on research that crosses traditional boundaries between information systems (IS) and health informatics disciplines. The purpose of the department is:

1. To increase opportunities for authors to publish health-related research to IS audiences. Submissions intended to meet this first objective should address topics that are interesting to the IS community and add value to the IS literature stream.
2. To support the efforts of researchers who conduct studies crossing IS and healthcare disciplines. Submission is encouraged for studies of the research process, tutorials, panel discussions, information system design and implementation studies, case studies, and other materials that will help researchers to create and carry out high-quality research in the area.

Keywords: interdisciplinary research, medical informatics, health informatics

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare is the largest single industry worldwide. In the U.S. healthcare expenditures make up 14% of GDP, and this figure is projected to rise to over 16% (\$2.3 trillion) by 2010 [Plunkett, 2003]. Despite the massive size and continuing growth of this industry, research in healthcare settings historically played only a tiny role in mainstream IS literature. To quantify this point, Chiasson and Davidson searched the contents of 17 IS-area journals published from 1985 to 2003 for articles that address healthcare. Their forthcoming paper in *Information and Organization* finds that only 1.2% of published papers relate to healthcare, and in less than half of these is there an attempt to study healthcare as a specialized IS context [Chiasson and Davidson, forthcoming].

Although most mainstream IS journals historically were indifferent to research that crosses IS and healthcare disciplines, interest among IS researchers is burgeoning. This growth is evidenced by the emergence of successful tracks devoted to the topic at IS conferences including the Hawaiian International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), the Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS), and the Information Resource Management Association (IRMA) Conference.

As conference submissions of cross-disciplinary IS and healthcare papers increase, a corresponding need develops for IS journals to publish high-quality research in the area. Creation of the Information Systems and Healthcare Department at CAIS is a direct response to that need.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND HEALTHCARE DEPARTMENT

The overarching purpose of the department is to increase publication opportunities and support for cross-disciplinary research in IS and healthcare. Prospective authors should note that the editors consider the two objectives of this overarching purpose to be conceptually distinct and to incorporate different review standards. The objectives are described in the following sections.

PUBLICATION OF HEALTH-RELATED IS RESEARCH

The department seeks to increase opportunities for authors to publish health-related research to an IS audience. Research intended to meet this objective is expected to exhibit rigor and validity. In addition, submissions should address topics that are interesting to the IS community and add value to the IS literature stream. Approaches to this standard include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Applying theories, methods, design principles, and/or practices of the IS discipline in healthcare settings
- Applying theories, methods, design principles, and/or practices of the health informatics discipline to IS studies conducted outside healthcare settings
- Contrasting theories, methods, design principles, and/or practices of IS and health informatics disciplines
- Assessing how healthcare contexts differ from other contexts regarding design, use, and management of information systems; examples of context topics that might be addressed include economics, social structures, training, and user characteristics
- Case examples, including teaching cases that can be brought into the classroom in both conventional and specialized IS courses.

It is important for prospective authors to recognize that a number of good journals already exist to serve audiences in the health informatics discipline¹. Orientation toward an IS audience is a key criterion for having health-related research accepted at CAIS. Submissions that are primarily oriented toward health informatics readers or other audiences outside IS will be declined with advice to submit elsewhere or to refocus the presentation of the work.

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCHERS IN IS AND HEALTHCARE

The department also will support the development of research and researchers in cross-disciplinary aspects of IS and healthcare. Submissions directed toward research support are expected to be written clearly and to address topics that interest prospective or active researchers in the area. The department does not constrain topic selection or the form of materials that may be submitted. However, submissions are especially encouraged in the following areas:

- Tutorials on designing, conducting, funding, and publishing cross-disciplinary research in IS and healthcare
- Essays and studies directed toward using health-related publications to achieve tenure and promotion within IS departments

¹ Examples include *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association (JAMIA)*, *Health Informatics Journal*, *Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR)*, *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*, and *International Journal of Healthcare Technology and Management*.

- Case studies suitable for classroom use and experiential reports (e.g., panel discussions) of cross-disciplinary research in IS and healthcare
- Literature reviews and annotated bibliographies addressing relevant topics
- Information system design in support of health-related research.

Prospective authors of research support materials are encouraged to submit an abstract for editorial comment prior to developing a complete submission.

PUBLICATION PROCEDURES

To speed publication, CAIS offers both light review and full review. For this department, because of its broad range of subject matter, light review is conducted by the Department Editor, who is a member of the CAIS editorial board, and one external reviewer. Full review includes at least two external reviewers. Light review usually results in quicker turnaround. Papers undergoing full review will have this fact noted in the paper. Because CAIS is electronic, it is able to publish a paper quite quickly once the paper is accepted.

CONTACT

Authors with questions about the Information Systems and Healthcare Department should contact the Department Editor, Vance Wilson, wilsonv@uwm.edu.

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