

ASIS&T ANNUAL MEETING PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

10th Annual Social Informatics Research Symposium Connecting (Epistemic) Cultures and (Intellectual) Communities

by Howard Rosenbaum and Pnina Fichman

2014 Annual Meeting Coverage

EDITOR'S SUMMARY

At the 2014 ASIS&T Annual Meeting, the Special Interest Group/Social Informatics (SIG/SI) celebrated 10 years spearheading research on the intersection of people, information and communications technology. The SIG's pre-conference symposium attracted an international group of scholars and students demonstrating ways their work applies to the Annual Meeting's theme of *Connecting Collections, Cultures, and Communities*. Presented papers examined the influence of IT consultants' work by organizational and technical contexts, social and cultural barriers impeding the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by resource-poor individuals, genre analysis of technologically mediated workplace practices and links between social networks and ICTs. A panel discussion explored ties between epistemic cultures and intellectual communities and ways to promote social informatics research on the topic. The SIG presented awards for Best Paper and Best Student Paper, both touching on collaboration to enhance content. The importance of the annual research symposium was reinforced by SIG/SI earning the 2014 SIG Publication-of-the-Year Award for a book that emerged from its 2012 symposium.

KEYWORDS

social informatics
research and development
cultural aspects
communities
information use

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This year, SIG/Social Informatics (SIG/SI) celebrated a decade of successful and vibrant SIG/SI research symposia, holding its 10th Annual Social Informatics Research Symposium on November 1, 2014, at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science and Technology in Seattle, Washington. Since 2004, established scholars, young researchers and doctoral students interested in the study of people, information and communications technology (ICT) and work and play have gathered at the SIG/SI ASIS&T Annual Social Informatics Research Symposium to share their work and ideas. Approximately 100 papers, posters and panels have been presented during the last decade, and for the past three years, an awards ceremony honoring the best papers published by social informatics (SI) faculty and students in the preceding years has been held.

Pnina Fichman and Howard Rosenbaum, both from the School of Informatics and Computing at Indiana University, Bloomington, organized this year's symposium, which was attended by an international group of scholars and students. This year the symposium featured an opening talk by Pnina Fichman, who reflected on the decade of research that has been presented at the symposium and commented on the ways in which, through this annual gathering, SIG/SI has been involved in connecting (epistemic) cultures and (intellectual) communities; this introduction set the tone for the day, aligning the symposium theme with the conference theme: connecting collections, cultures and communities.

Following the introduction, the first session of the symposium featured four papers, each of which brought a different perspective to bear on the symposium theme.

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1. **EunJeong Cheon** presented a case study, co-authored with Mohammad Jarrahi, that used an SI framework based on sociomateriality, to examine the ways in which IT consultants' knowledge practices are mediated by distinct affordances of the ICT assemblages they routinely use in their work and the organizational contexts in which they are used.
2. **Wayne Buente** discussed ongoing research, co-authored with Luz Quiroga, Tamara Heck and Joe Greene, that focuses on the ways in which resource-poor and homeless people in Honolulu face and struggle with social and cultural barriers in their attempts to make use of ICTs, particularly mobile phones and computers, to access social media.
3. **Asen Ivanov** presented a conceptual framework based in organizational informatics that makes use of genre analysis to examine genres of technologically mediated workplace practices, arguing that the framework can serve as a middle-range theory guiding the empirical study of sociotechnical systems in organizations.
4. **Mohammad Jarrahi** provided an overview of emerging themes shaping the study of ICT in organizations, focusing on the importance of the materiality and agency of the IT artifact, the concept of ICTs as assemblages, the complex interrelationships between ICT and social networks and the importance of information in the conceptualization of ICTs.

Following the paper session was a panel, *Social Informatics and Epistemic Cultures*, with **Caroline Haythornthwaite**, **Robert Mason**, and **Howard Rosenbaum**. Moderated by **Pnina Fichman**, and with a lively question and answer period from the audience, the panelists discussed five questions:

1. How do you see your work as bridging epistemic cultures and intellectual communities?
2. What are the social and technological forces that enable and constrain connections between SI and cognate intellectual communities?
3. What are some of the ways in which we can begin to establish and maintain connections among SI and cognate epistemic cultures and intellectual communities?

4. What can a social informatics approach tell us about the nature of the boundaries among SI and cognate epistemic communities?
5. What are the challenges and opportunities of engaging in this type of SI work?

It was clear during the discussion that the SI scholarly community within ASIS&T is healthy and active and that it is worth the time and effort to provide this yearly venue for presenting and discussing SI scholarship and cutting-edge work. The group agreed that there is a need for additional publication venues, for mentoring new entrants into SI and for expanding the reach of the community.

The final session was the presentation of two best paper awards. The 2014 Best Paper in Social Informatics award went to **Nama Budhathoki** and **Caroline Haythornthwaite** for their paper "Motivation for Open Collaboration: Crowd and Community Models and the Case of OpenStreetMap," published in the *American Behavioral Scientist*. The 2014 Best Student Paper in Social Informatics was given to **Gal Oestreicher-Singer** and **Lior Zalmanson** for their paper "Content or Community? A Digital Business Strategy for Content Providers in the Social Age," published in *Management Information Systems Quarterly*.

At the end of the symposium, Fichman informed the audience that SIG/SI was proud to have received the 2014 SIG Publication-of-the-Year Award for *Social Informatics: Past, Present and Future*, edited by Fichman & Rosenbaum. This was an especially apposite award for the SIG because the genesis of the book was in the 2012 SIG/SI symposium. Six papers in the book had been presented at the symposium, and six were authored or co-authored by people who had presented work at previous symposia. This award reaffirmed the strength and vitality of the SIG and the research symposia.

The purpose of the SIG/SI pre-conference research symposium has been and continues to be to provide a supportive and welcoming session where scholars and researchers can present current research and research in progress that investigates the social aspects of information and communication technologies across all areas of ASIS&T. Building on the success of past years, the symposium includes members of many SIGs and

defines *social* broadly to include critical and historical approaches as well as contemporary social analysis. It also defines *technology* broadly to include traditional technologies like paper, state-of-the-art computer systems and mobile and pervasive devices. Submissions may include empirical, critical and theoretical work, as well as richly described practice cases and demonstrations. We look forward to beginning our second decade of symposia and hope that more members of the ASIS&T community will join us.

Full Conference Schedule

Introduction: Pnina Fichman, Indiana University: *Reflections on a Decade of SIG/SI Symposia*

Papers

EunJeong Cheon and Mohammad Jarrahi, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "The Interplay Between Different Forms of Knowledge and Use of ICTs in Knowledge Practices of Consultants"

Wayne Buente, Luz Quiroga, Tamara Heck and Joe Greene, University of Hawaii at Manoa. "Between Two Publics: Examining the Social Context of ICT Use Among Homeless Individuals in Hawaii"

Asen O. Ivanov, University of Toronto. "Genres of Workplace Practices: Towards a New Socio-Technical Idiom for Organizational Informatics"

Mohammad Jarrahi, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "Social Informatics and Directions for Future Research on Implications of ICTs in Organizations"

Poster

Min Sook Park and Hyejin Park, Florida State University. "Health Information Referencing in Online Communities: Case Study of Breast Cancer Information for Korean Immigrants"

Panel Discussion: Social Informatics and Epistemic Cultures

Caroline Haythornthwaite, University of British Columbia
Robert Mason, University of Washington
Howard Rosenbaum, Indiana University
Pnina Fichman, Moderator, Indiana University

Best Paper Awards and Presentations

2013 Social Informatics Paper (\$1,000): Nama Budhathoki and Caroline Haythornthwaite (2013). Motivation for Open Collaboration: Crowd and Community Models and the Case of OpenStreetMap. Published in *American Behavioral Scientist* 57: 548-575.

2013 Best Social Informatics Student Paper (\$500): Gal Oestreicher-Singer and Lior Zalmanson (2013). Content or Community? A Digital Business Strategy for Content Providers in the Social Age. Published in *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, 37(2), 591-616.

SIG SI Activities at ASIS&T 2014

Saturday, November 1

10th Annual Social Informatics Research Symposium

Sunday, November 2

Panel: *Social Informatics and Social Media: Theoretical Reflection* (Noriko Hara, Howard Rosenbaum, Pnina Fichman, Ken Fleischmann, Muhammad Jarrahi, and Brian Butler)

Monday, November 3

Panel: *Boundary Object in Information Science Research* (Isto Huvila, Theresa Anderson, Eva Hourihan Jansen, Pam McKenzie, Lynn Westbrook, and Adam Worrall)

Tuesday, November 4

ASIST Awards Luncheon: SIG Publication-of-the-Year Award: *Social Informatics: Past, Present and Future* (Fichman & Rosenbaum, eds.)

URLs

2014 Symposium Schedule: <https://asistsigi.wordpress.com/2014/09/11/2014-sig-si-symposium-schedule/>

SIG/SI: <https://asistsigi.wordpress.com>

SIG/SI on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/134354579994052/?fref=ts>

Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics: <http://rkcsi.indiana.edu> ■