Information Systems Journal Special Issue on: Digital Entrepreneurship

Special Issue Guest Editors: Kathy Shen, Valerie Lindsay and Yunjie (Calvin) Xu

Motivation

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies with new functionalities has profoundly changed competitive environments, reshaping traditional business strategies and processes (Bharadwaj et al. 2013). Such technologies also give rise to new ways of collaboration, leveraging resources, product/service design, development and deployment over open standards and shared technologies (Markus and Loebecke 2013). At the micro level, digital technologies also reshaped the mentality of entrepreneurs (Domenico et al. 2014) and hence affect their decision making processes (Shepherd et al. 2014). Digital entrepreneurship includes ventures and transformation of existing businesses by creating novel digital technologies and/or novel usage of such technologies. Currently many countries consider digital entrepreneurship as a critical pillar for digital economic development. It is imperative to develop a fine-grained understanding of digital entrepreneurship.

Traditionally, research on entrepreneurship seeks to understand "how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited" (Shane and Venkataraman 2000) and how entrepreneurial activities, processes, and outcomes are influenced by certain contexts (Zahra et al. 2014). Despite the increasing numbers of entrepreneurs and businesses that are currently using digital technologies to pursue opportunities, research has lagged far behind practice and paid limited attention to the phenomenon (Grégoire and Shepherd 2012). Only recently have some studies in the entrepreneurship field started to examine the impact of digital technologies on entrepreneurs' decision making (Autio et al. 2011; Fischer and Reuber 2014; Sigfusson and Chetty 2013) and entrepreneurial activities for venture development (Allison et al. 2014; Reuber and Fischer 2009). Several review articles on entrepreneurship also clearly point out the gaps in understanding the novel usage of digital technologies by entrepreneurs (Kiss et al. 2012; Mainela et al. 2014; Shepherd et al. 2014). Research in the IS field has a relatively long tradition of investigating entrepreneurial actions enabled by digital technologies within an organizational context (Bharadwaj et al. 2013; Sambamurthy et al. 2003). However, only a few recent studies have shed light on the characteristics and design of digital platforms for entrepreneurial activities, such as crowdfunding (Burtch 2013; Burtch 2014; Zheng et al. 2014).

Call for Papers

The objective of this special issue is to provide a forum for IS and other business scholars to engage in this important dialogue on digital entrepreneurship and to contribute to the development of cumulative knowledge in this pivotal area. We welcome research that focuses on the following themes:

1) **The nature and scope of digital entrepreneurship:** while digital entrepreneurship has been used for some researchers and policy makers, its conceptualization remains quite elusive. The development of digital technologies characterized with pervasive connectivity, big data, open and internet-based standard, shared digital platforms and etc., gives rise to the emergence of the digital business strategy concept, which goes beyond the traditional view of IT strategy as a function within firms and realizes the potential of digital business strategies in creating differential business value (Bharadwaj et al. 2013). In the context of organizational usage of IT, it has been recognized that firms' digital options can affect entrepreneurial alertness and actions which are critical for the development of agility and competitive advamtages (Sambamurthy et al. 2003). It remains murky when it comes to digital entrepreneurship. Whether and how do digital technologies transform entrepreneurship? How is digital entrepreneurship different from traditional one? While most prior research on using digital technologies for entrepreneurship

examines sporadic phenomena related to digital entrepreneurship, there is the lack of conceptual discussion and development on this concept.

2) **Novel usage of digital technologies for entrepreneurial activities and venture development:** Recent development in entrepreneurship research has given an increasing attention to the novel usage of digital technologies for entrepreneurship. For instance, Autio et al. (2011) point out that the online user communities have potential to address both technical advances (means) and user needs (ends), which affect opportunity recognition, evaluation and entrepreneurial action. Sigfusson & Chetty (2013) report how international entrepreneurs involved in software in Iceland use social networking sites to develop their social capital and to identify opportunities. Fischer & Reuber (2014) suggest that entrepreneurial firms' online communication via social media, such as Twitter, could reduce audience uncertainty about product/service quality and enable differentiation from rivals. Finally, digital platforms, such as open source communities (Yetis-larsson et al. 2014), or innovation competition websites (Lampel et al. 2011), also serve as marketplaces of knowledge and innovations (Dushnitsky and Klueter 2011), or as brokers between solutions seekers and problems solvers (Fischer and Reuber 2014). Under this theme, we would like to welcome research that explores the potential of digital technologies in not only supporting traditional entrepreneurial activities and outcomes, but also more interestingly, enabling new entrepreneurial activities, processes and venture outcomes.

3) **The impact of digital platform characteristics (e.g., social networking support, platform rating and risk filtering systems) on the process and/or outcomes of entrepreneurship (e.g., idea formation, branding, fund raising, operation).** The low barrier to use digital platforms increases the number of competitors, and the resulting crowded and noisy market makes it difficult for any particular firm/entrepreneur to distinguish itself from its rivals (cf. Loane et al. 2004). Furthermore, the communication between entrepreneurs and investors/consumers is mediated through digital platform. It is, therefore, important to understand how to manage and design such platforms to enable knowledge transfer and make it useful for entrepreneurs. For instance, Allison et al. (2014) examine the impact of linguistic cues of entrepreneurial projects on crowdfunding websites on funders' motivation to contribute. They find that funders are more likely to contribute to ventures framed as helping others, rather than those presented as business opportunities. Avgerou and Li (2013) examine the micro-entrepreneurs over the largest C2C website, Taobao.com, in China and show how platform tools and services enable those micro-entrepreneurs to overcome cultural reluctance of economic exchange with strangers. Recently crowdfunding has received growing interest from IS fields (Burtch 2013; Burtch 2014; Zheng et al. 2014) and such studies provide interesting insights about funders' lending behaviours and contribution patterns on crowdfunding websites. Under this theme, we would like to welcome research that explicates the interaction between technical characteristics of digital platforms and entrepreneurial consequences. Possible research areas include, but are not limited to:
    a. The impact of digital platforms on the formation and maintenance of entrepreneurship teams.
    b. The relationship between digital platform utilization and entrepreneurship outcomes.
    c. The designs of digital platform for better supporting entrepreneurship, such as better mechanisms for the discovery of quality projects.
    d. The relationship between platform policy design, the welfare of investors and entrepreneurs, and the community outcome.
    e. Strategic competition among/between investors and entrepreneurs on a digital platform.

Submissions

Submissions should broadly address or relate to the aforementioned aspects in their contribution to the theory and practice of entrepreneurship over digital technologies. Ideally, submissions will provide new understandings of the implications of digital technologies on entrepreneurship. There is no restriction on research methodology. Submissions will be evaluated using rigorous criteria associated with high quality academic research.

1. Explain how they meet the Special Issue objectives.
2. Present insights and contributions based on empirical evidence (i.e. not be a review article, an opinion article, a speculative paper nor be based on algorithmic analysis of secondary data).
3. Be innovative in their contribution to IS theory and practice.
4. Ideally be generalizable to a broad and/or prevalent range of contexts.
5. Meet criteria for reporting completeness, structure and research rigor required for ISJ.
6. Not be research in progress papers.

Papers of not more than 8,000 words (excluding references and appendices) should be submitted by deadline Jan. 31, 2016 via Manuscript Central: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/isj

For further details on author guidelines, see: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN) 1365-2575/homepage/ForAuthors.html

Any queries should be directed to the special issue editors.

Timeline

- Papers of not more than 8,000 words (excluding references and appendices) should be submitted by the deadline of **Jan 31. 2016** via Manuscript Central: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/isj
- First round review notification: April 30, 2016
- Revisions for accepted papers: July 31, 2016;
- A second and/or third round of review and revision will be completed by December 2016;
- Final editorial reviews and decisions will be made by March 2017.
- For further details on author guidelines, see: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1365-2575/homepage/ForAuthors.html
- Any queries should be directed to the special issue editors.

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Dr. Kathy Ning Shen is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Business and Management at the University of Wollongong in Dubai. She received her Doctoral degree in Information Systems from the City University of Hong Kong and was the Chairperson of the Management Information System Department at Abu Dhabi University. Her main research areas include human-computer interaction, applications of information systems in organizations, e-marketing, virtual communities, and knowledge management. She has published more than 60 refereed journal and conference articles. Her work has appeared in top refereed journals such as *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, Information & Management*, *Journal of Business Research, Communications of the ACM*, *Behaviour and Information Technology, Journal of Computer Information Systems, Internet Ressearch,* and top conferences in the field.

Professor Valerie Lindsay is Dean of the Faculty of Business at the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD). She has a PhD from the University of Warwick in the UK. Prior to joining UOWD, she held academic positions at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and at the University of Warwick, UK, specializing in international business and strategy. Professor Lindsay's research interests lie in the area of international strategy, specifically, internationalization and market entry, SMEs, services internationalization and business in Asia. Her work has been published in leading journals, including *Management International Review, Organizational Dynamics, Industrial Marketing Management, and International Journal of Services Industry Marketing*, and she co-authored the book, *'Knowledge at Work'*. Before joining academia, Valerie was the New Zealand Marketing Manager for ICI Pharmaceuticals, and also worked in two New Zealand government departments in the areas of trade and tertiary education. She has consulted widely in strategy and marketing in industry and in government over many years.

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