



ISM SEMINAR

Spring Term 2016-17

Speaker: Professor Suprateek Sarker, University of Virginia

Title: The Practice of Qualitative Research in the IS Discipline: An Evolutionary View and Some Implications for Authors and Evaluators

Date: Wednesday 15 March 2017

Venue: 0.301, WBS Scarman Road

Time: 14:00

Abstract: Qualitative Research in the Information Systems discipline has come a long way, from being dismissed as “exploratory research” or “pre-research,” not worthy of being featured in leading “scientific” journals in the discipline, to a state where such research is seen as legitimate and even welcome within much of the mainstream IS research community. Despite these very positive developments in line with the value of pluralism that our discipline has embraced, and the gradual inclusion of qualitative work in high-profile mainstream outlets, noted academics have expressed concerns about the “disproportionately low number of qualitative articles in top journals,” and attributed this pattern to (among other reasons) “perceptions of negative bias against qualitative approaches from editors and reviewers in leading journals” (Conboy et al. 2012, p. 113). To help make sense of the situation, in this paper, we offer a critical commentary on the arena of qualitative research in the Information Systems discipline, reflecting on why reviewer or editorial evaluations of qualitative manuscripts, with respect to methodological issues, are often perceived as being “prejudiced” (Markus 1997). By viewing the adoption of qualitative research in the IS discipline as an evolutionary process, and by highlighting key differences among the various types of qualitative inquiry, we offer and make visible a number of implications for both authors and evaluators of qualitative manuscripts.

Biography: Suprateek (Supra) Sarker is currently Professor of Information Technology at the McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia. He is also a Visiting Distinguished Professor at Aalto University, Finland. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati and recently was given an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Jyväskylä. Suprateek’s past work, most of which is qualitative or multi-method in nature, has been published in numerous outlets. Suprateek is currently serving as a Senior Editor (Emeritus, active) of the *MIS Quarterly*, as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of AIS*, and as a Senior Editor of the *Decision Sciences Journal*. He also serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of the MIS*, *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, and *IT & People*. He is a past co-recipient of the Stafford Beer Medal from the *Operational Research Society* (United Kingdom) in 2006. Finally, he has been a co-recipient of multiple external grants, including one from *National Science Foundation (USA)* to study work-life conflict of globally distributed IT workers.

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