Spring Term 2008

Speaker: **Professor Matti Rossi, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland**

Title: **Action Design: a fresh approach to information systems research**

Date: **Tuesday 1 April 2008**

Venue: **Room B3.19, Warwick Business School, Scarman Road**

Time: **14.30 – 16.00**

Abstract: Over the past years, two issues have consistently dominated the Information Systems (IS) research discourse in the field. The first issue is the relevance of IS research. Specifically, it is contended that IS research is not relevant to practice, leading to disconnect between academics and practitioners. The second issue is the definition of the core of the discipline. The diverse positions taken here amongst academics leads to a separation of research approaches and values between behavioral and technology-oriented researchers. One conclusion that can be made from this is that IS research is failing in its duty to influence practice by not aligning its core concerns with those faced in practice. Clearly, we need to reflect on this vital aspect of our academic work and search for innovative solutions to be relevant while at the same time not lose the rigor that is essential for sound academic research.

In this presentation, I will discuss an attempt in this direction. It is based on an ongoing collaborative effort with Dr Maung Sein, Agder University, Norway, Dr Sandeep Purao, Penn State University, USA, Dr Ola Henfridsson and Dr Rikard Lindgren both of Viktoria Institute, Gothenburg, Sweden.

Our approach is based on the recognition that IS research has a dual mission, namely to (a) add to existing theory, and (b) to produce knowledge to support IS practitioners in solving current and anticipated problems. We subscribe to the notion that the core IS mission is developing IT artifacts and understanding their use in organizations. We can achieve this by taking a proactive stance in research which is characterized by being prescriptive or constructive, aimed at improving practice, solving problems and which has a utilitarian perspective. Two research approaches that have these characteristics are Design Research (DR) and Action Research (AR). The specific question we seek to answer is:
How can IS researchers combine AR and DR to develop knowledge about building innovative IT-artifacts for problem-solving in authentic environments?
To answer this question, we propose an innovative research approach called Action Design (AD) that builds knowledge by (a) intervening in an organization (b) through developing an IT artifact. We claim that Action Design is a new approach to IS research that tries to combine DR and AR into a holistic programme for studying impacts of using new artefacts to solve organizational problems.

Biography: **Matti Rossi** is a professor of information systems at Helsinki School of Economics. He is currently on sabbatical at Claremont Graduate University, USA. He has worked as research fellow at Erasmus University Rotterdam and as a visiting assistant professor at Georgia State University, Atlanta. He received his PhD in Business Administration from the University of Jyväskylä in 1998. He has been the principal investigator in several major research projects funded by the technological development center of Finland and Academy of Finland.

His research papers have appeared in journals such as *CACM*, *Journal of AIS*, *Information and Management* and *Information Systems*, and over thirty of them have appeared in conferences such as ICIS, HICSS and CAiSE.

More information: http://www.hse.fi/EN/HKI/R/Matti.Rossi/1_ContactInfo.htm

Contact: Alison Solman, ISM Group
Alison.solman@wbs.ac.uk
024 7652 4101