THEORISING DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Special Issue Guest Editors:
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While information systems are increasingly designed and implemented on a large scale within and across a variety of organizational settings around the world, information system research tends to remain focused on North American and Western European environments. However, recent contributors to the literature in the area of information technology and development have argued that we cannot take for granted that findings originating in these contexts are necessarily relevant in developing countries located in different continents. Indeed, the role of information technology in the context of development (ICT4D) is a strategically important area of study. Much of the ICT4D literature to date has had a strong empirical focus, providing insights into the shape and nature of the use of information technology within a specific developing context and within a particular empirical domain such as health or education. Alternatively, the literature has aimed at policy relevance, or has been primarily concerned with providing evidence for the design of specific technological artefacts. This emphasis on description and prescription has lead to contributions to the literature that have explicitly focussed on theorising development and technological change being (relatively) neglected. A number of recent contributions to the literature have started to consider this relative omission. Several accounts have documented the range of different theoretical stances that have been drawn upon in ICT4D publications as including activity theory, institutional theory, actor network theory, structuration theory, contextualist theory, and theories of culture (Avgerou, 2008; ITID, 2007; Walsham and Sahay, 2006; Silva and Westrup, 2009). Avgerou (2008, 2010) has provided several matrices to account for the range of epistemological positions adopted in ICT4D research.

This special issue of the Information Systems Journal focuses on technology related change in the context of developing countries, and for developing countries. Our particular concern is to develop theoretically inspired insights and reflections in this domain. Broadly we conceive that this could comprise of at least two approaches. One could be to formulate theoretically informed insights into or derived from specific empirical studies of information technology for development. Such papers should devote part of their discussion and / or conclusion to reflect on the theoretical basis, and offer suggestions for future theoretical development. Alternatively, we encourage papers that strengthen our conceptualization and theorization of development related to technological change. Such a paper can provide reflections on the apparent merits or limitations of different theories to understanding ICT4D or perhaps

question the appropriateness of previous theoretical positions that have informed this research area to date.

We welcome papers from different epistemological positions and from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds who are interested in theorising development and technology. While certainly not exhaustive, we would like contributors to review the following questions in putting their contribution together:

- Which theories have dominated the research area to date and what observations can we make of this?
- What theories are relevant to furthering our understanding of development and technological change?
- What is the role of theory in better understanding the development and technological change literature?
- How would a particular theoretical approach affect future research?
- Which theories from other academic disciplines help to understand this domain?
- What is the relationship between theory and practice?
- How does information technology get entangled in performing and legitimizing particular practices? How does it change with time and scale?
- What contexts, not only the local, come to shape technological change?
- What research methodologies can be designed to provide 'thick understandings' of IT based development efforts which are widely dispersed in time and scale?
- How to account for aspects of power?
- How does technology frame our understanding of development?
- How different is the management of IS in the context of developing countries?

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Submission Guidelines
Manuscripts should not normally exceed 7000 words and should be submitted electronically as a MS Word document to the attention of ISJ administrator Kathryn Goodwin at isj@brunel.ac.uk. The email subject should be ISJ Special Issue Submission. The first page of the document (cover page) should have the names, institutional affiliations, postal and email addresses of all authors of the work submitted and a clear identification of the primary author who will be the sole point of contact between the guest editors and the authors. Except on the cover page, the authors names and affiliations and any other identifying information must NOT appear elsewhere in the manuscript. Upon receipt, an initial assessment of the manuscript will be carried out by at least two of the guest editors to ascertain fit of the manuscript with the special issue scope and mission.   You will normally receive an acknowledgement within a few days. Detailed instructions for the preparation of manuscripts are provided on the publisher's website and follow the link to 'authors' guidelines'. Please follow these guidelines before making a submission. Further details of the Information Systems Journal can be found at http://disc.brunel.ac.uk/isj/

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Timeline:
- Call for Papers 30th October 2010
- Deadline for Submitting Papers: **2nd May 2011 (Extended deadline!)**
- Review Results Due to Authors: 1st August 2011
- Deadline for Revised Paper Submission: 1st November 2011
- Second Review Results Due to Authors: 1st February 2012
- Final Decision on Papers: 16th April 2012

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