



## **IT Artefact & practice theorizing – pragmatic perspectives**

*Call for papers to a Special Issue in Systems, Signs & Actions*

### **Theme**

There is a growing recognition among information systems scholars that IT artefacts should not be black-boxed as mere technical objects (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001). IT artefacts are instruments for work and communication embedded in their social context. The social, organisational and linguistic characteristics of IT artefacts should be acknowledged as well as their technical and material nature. In their seminal article, Orlikowski & Iacono (2001) raised a call for theorizing the IT artefact. They outlined alternative views of the IT artefact and proposed an ensemble view. As responses to their call, several views of the IT artefact have been presented (e.g. Ågerfalk, 2003; Sein & Harindranath, 2004; Alter, 2006; Markus & Silver, 2008; Matook & Brown, 2008; Sjöström, 2010; Strong & Volkoff, 2010).

An improved understanding of IT artefacts is needed in relation to their design, use and evolution. The importance of IT artefact theorizing for design is shown by Sein et al (2011). They build their method for Action Design Research explicitly on the ensemble view from Orlikowski & Iacono (2001). An improved understanding of the context of IT artefacts is needed as well. There is a growing interest to theorize the context as practices (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Goldkuhl, 2011) or work-systems (Alter, 2006). This includes an interest in the combined social and material characteristics of such practices (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). The orientation of practice theorizing in IS follows a general ‘practice turn’ in social science (e.g. Schatzki et al, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002; Whittington, 2006; Mietinen et al, 2009; Gherardi, 2009).

The claims for theorizing IT artefacts as socially embedded instruments for work and communication and for theorizing the artefact’s context as practices can be seen as elements of a pragmatic re-orientation in IS. Statements for such a pragmatic re-orientation can be found in Goles & Hirschheim (2000), Baskerville & Myers (2004), Ågerfalk (2010) and Goldkuhl (2012).

This special issue is based on the International workshop on IT Artefact Design & Workpractice Intervention ([www.vits.org/?pageId=381](http://www.vits.org/?pageId=381)) held in Barcelona on June 10, 2012. Papers from this workshop as well as other papers that address the theme of this special issue are welcome. Inquiries and submissions should be sent to the editors of this special issue.

### **Special Issue Editors**

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## Systems, Signs & Actions

Systems, Signs & Actions ([www.sysiac.org](http://www.sysiac.org)) is an open access journal in information systems especially devoted to the study of information technology, action, communication and workpractices.

## Schedule

Submissions are expected not later than November 30, 2012.

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