



News of the Cologne Institute for INFORMATION SYSTEMS 07|2020

Editorial



Ladies and gentlemen,
dear friends of the CIIS,

Given the limited possibilities we all currently have for face-to-face interaction and socializing, we want to reach out to as many interested stakeholders as possible in this way.

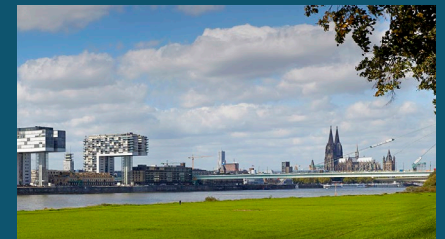
Many questions remain about how we as a society, as members of the University of Cologne, as a part of CIIS, and we as individuals are dealing with the Corona crisis, which is here to stay for the foreseeable future. The situation is being discussed on all levels on a daily basis, in teaching and in research, where we are both concerned about the health protection of employees and students and easing the burdens the protection measures are putting on everyone, while at the same time still fulfilling our mission – conducting top-level research, teaching, and advisory, now in a primarily distance-based way. All of this is done in close coordination with and supported by the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences as well as the University as a whole.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to all colleagues at CIIS! Due to you, the transition to distance-based teaching in April was done seamlessly with relatively few glitches. Although in many cases not optimal, distance-based teaching will also be our constant companion in the upcoming winter term. Be assured that we at CIIS will strive to provide the best teaching experiencing possible given the current constraints.

Next to this primary mission, CIIS also tries to help during the Corona crisis in many other and small ways. For example, one initiative focuses on small business and our students. Many smaller businesses lack resources or skills to adapt to the current situation through digitalization. The crisis has also had a significant impact on students. Many students are struggling to find opportunities in shrinking job markets, or had their internships or student jobs cancelled. Therefore we invite small businesses to propose a project that will help them manage the challenges of the current crisis, which are small enough that student volunteers can reasonably perform them in a timeframe of four weeks or less for no fee.

Hang in there, stay healthy.

Christoph Rosenkranz



This and previous newsletters can be found digitally at www.ciis.uni-koeln.de/newsletter/

There you can also register for our e-mail newsletter.

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1st Faculty-wide Workshop on “Academic Writing for Management Scholars”

Information systems professors Jan Recker and Wolf Ketter teamed up with Marketing colleagues Werner Reinartz and Marc Fischer to hold a workshop on academic writing open to all interesting doctoral and post-doctoral young researchers from the WiSo faculty. The workshop was held on 13 January 2020. Over 80 scholars participated from

ten areas of the faculty, which meant a bigger room, more pizza and more post-event beers were needed than originally planned.

The workshop discussed why academic publishing is important, it covered topics such as producing a manuscript for top-tier journals, building a publication strategy, how to write a lot, and navigating the review process.

It was ended with an open Q&A panel session and followed by pizza and beers. Participants cherished the input but also the opportunity to connect with other researchers from outside their own area. Plans are to follow-up this successful event with more faculty-wide workshops on topics of interest to all WiSo scholars.

Research Project: Home Office Directive due to Covid-19 – Chaos at Home or Everything as Usual?

The Covid-19 crisis is considered one of the worst crises on the globe since the end of World War II. The consequences, be they health-related or economic, are still difficult to assess. To further limit the spread of the virus, governments and companies have decided to – whenever possible – ask their employees to work from home. This change in organizational culture and work environments affects nearly everybody – not at last also large-scale agile information system development projects.

A small team of researchers of the CIIS and ESSEC Business School Cergy-Pontoise, France, are currently investigating how teams within this context are affected by this new situation in their daily work processes and routines. The researchers are especially interested in how communication, social aspects, coordination, but also control within the teams change. How do different levels of socio-emotional aspects such as trust and psychological safety influence individual team members and the team at large? How does the performance of a team change in terms of e.g. time or quality when be thrown in at the deep end? What are influences on technical debt and social capital?

We are currently looking for additional partners for this broad-based study. In detail, we are looking for teams that make use of agile methods or practices. Study results will be made available for further use upon participation. If you are interested, just contact Tim Dreesen (dreesen@wiso.uni-koeln.de) or Phil Hennel (hennel@wiso.uni-koeln.de)

CIIS Helps Initiative

COVID-19 has hit many businesses hard, especially smaller, local businesses that are still at the early stages of digitalization. Their response to COVID-19 has suffered from delays, resource bottlenecks, coordination challenges, or security vulnerabilities. These issues are critical now and they likely persist over time. New norms are forming around customer behaviors, online shopping, or remote working policies, which may endure long after restrictions are eased.

COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on students. Many are struggling to find opportunities in shrinking job markets. Many had their internships or student jobs cancelled. All the while, many students are keen to build practical experience and actively look to use their newly learned skills to help others in society.

In response, our institute has joined a global initiative organized by the Association for Information Systems, which has the goal of bringing together small, local business in need of help with digitalization during COVID-19, and information systems student volunteers who seek to apply their knowledge to help society.

We started to invite small businesses from the Cologne region to propose a technology project that will help them manage the challenges of COVID-19. The projects must be small enough that student volunteers can perform them in a timeframe of four weeks or less for no fee.

Examples of such projects include:

- Creating or modifying a website
- Building or updating a database
- Documenting, analyzing or automating business processes
- Enabling remote operations for staff or consumers

We received several project proposals from local, small Cologne businesses and we continue to welcome more. Short project proposals can be submitted to [CIIShelps\(at\)wiso.uni-koeln.de](mailto:CIIShelps(at)wiso.uni-koeln.de). We screen all proposals and make them available for selection by our students. Some projects may have to be rejected if they are too ambitious, not feasible, or not critical to business. Some projects may be too big or may not fit the skill sets of the students we have available. Proposal submissions should include name, contact details, and a short description (100 words or fewer) of your business problem and assistance sought.

For students who wish to participate, we created an initiative website on our internal student management system ILLIAS, where they can register to view submitted project proposals. We plan to continue this initiative over the summer break and we are presently exploring funding options so that we can offer small summer stipends for student volunteers that work on these projects.

Find more information on our website: <https://ciis.uni-koeln.de/en/news/archive/ciis-initiative-during-the-covid-19-crisis>

Faculty Junior Teaching Award for CIIS Course

The course "Design Thinking for Digital Innovation" by Matthias Potthast (Visiting Lecturer at CIIS) and Dr. Roman Tilly (Post-doc at CIIS) has been awarded the Junior Teaching Award of the WiSo Faculty for the fall term 2019/2020 in the category of courses with up to 50 participants. The course is offered in the study program M.Sc. Information Systems and covers methods from Design Thinking and Lean Startup

that enable students to develop new customer-oriented solutions and business models. Throughout the course, student teams apply newly learned methods like user interviews and tests to develop and evaluate solutions to actual design challenges. Matthias Potthast has many years of experience in startup development and digital transformation of companies and has recently co-

founded Relevo (relevo.de), a company which offers a sustainable packaging solution for to-go & take away in order to tackle the plastic waste and enable customers a sustainable, urban lifestyle.

CIIS Examines the Status-quo of Digitalization in the German Waste Management Industry

Container ordering via online shop, paperless order processing, route guidance via intelligent navigation system: Are these digital solutions of the distant future or already applied practices in the German waste management industry?

A new study by the University of Cologne is to shed more light on the subject. Three researchers at the CIIS are now investigating the digitalization in the industry with a survey among several hundred waste managers.

Among other things, the survey is concerned with general and specific influences of digitalization on the various operational and administrative business areas of waste managers, the distribution channels through which

customers order, the automation and monitoring of transport and container logistics, and the technology used in sorting plants. The researchers further want to find out what opportunities and risks waste managers associate with digitalization, what are the drivers and barriers to further development, and how customer needs are developing.

Based on the results of the study, the researchers aim to determine the status-quo of digitalization in the waste management industry, provide an outlook, and generate recommendations for practitioners and policymakers.

For further information you may contact Roman Zeiss via email (zeiss@wiso.uni-koeln.de).

CIIS Research Seminar Series (Remote Edition)

The Cologne Institute for Information Systems fosters a vivid academic exchange and regularly invites scholars to present and discuss their research. These academic discussions and debates are essential for high quality research, as it helps scholars to reflect upon and improve their research. Since the institute's research seminar series is typically organized as a brown bag seminar, we had to switch gears during the global COVID-19 pandemic. In order to maintain the academic discourse, we quickly moved our seminar series toward online sessions, using zoom. This also created the opportunity to open up our seminar series to anyone who was interested by making the call-in details public on our

seminar's website. The institute proudly welcomed scholars from the University of Mannheim, Free University of Berlin and the University of Cologne during the summer term.

The current schedule and topics can be found online at <https://ciis.uni-koeln.de/en/research/research-seminar>.

"Capstone Project Information Systems" (Remote Edition)

The course "Capstone Project Information Systems" (Bachelor) was one of the first courses that started in the summer term exclusively via videoconferencing. For example, the 2-week and full-day preparatory course was conducted remotely for the first time. Part of the course was also an agile training, which was conducted by our cooperation partner Accenture. Currently, a total of five smaller student teams (3-5 project members) are developing solutions based on case studies dealing with real-world problems of our partners. The topics of our current case studies are as follows:

- Single source of information for Covid-19 related questions via a fully automated web chat bot for students (Accenture)
- Building of a loyalty program for purchases on the real.de marketplace (real.digital)
- Development of a "virtual fair for study opportunities" of the UzK (WiSo-Marketing)
- Integration of a dashboard for the internal administration of the dealers participating in LOLOCO (loloco.de).
- An application that integrates and simplifies the PowerTAC Analysis Platform toolset (CIIS)

Despite the initially unfamiliar way of collaboration, all participants quickly adapted to the new situation. The programming teams are now accustomed to the mechanisms of distributed software development and have already produced some very good interim results. We are looking forward to the final presentations in July and are eagerly awaiting the final solutions.

Master Class „Keeping up the Pace“ with BCG Platinion

The Institute's partner BCG Platinion hosted an online event for students on how to "Keeping up the Pace" during times of unprecedented challenges to society in terms of the way we live and work. The Master Class offering was received with great interest among students during the COVID-19 crisis. The discussion included both the

implications from the perspective of a remote working digital organization as well as the studying experience from students' perspective during an online only semester. Platinion presented their way of digital collaboration, from tools over working organization to stories behind the scenes. Students learned about team working norms, proactive communication, personal wellbeing,

digital tools, virtual meeting etiquette, and how to keep information flowing freely when remote work is the new normal. Platinion and the CIIS will host another event in a consortium format in November. We aim to support master students in their endeavor for selecting exciting as well as relevant thesis topics and connecting students with experts from practice and academia. Further information will follow.

E-PLUS Project "Crowde"

Due to the corona situation, the current semester highlighted the importance of innovative solutions for digital teaching, not only for the University of Cologne, but for educational institutions worldwide. At the same time, the CIIS is adopting the E-PLUS project „crowde“, which was launched at the end of 2017 and represents an important step in this direction.

With crowde, an attractive system in terms of usability with many features has been created. It uses the concept of crowdsourcing to support lecturers in the teaching of content and in the examination process. Students and teachers can create, evaluate and improve exam-relevant questions of different types in order to use them for practice purposes as well as for examination processes.

crowde has already proved its worth in the practice of three CIIS courses with 1,528 questions created, 1,590 registered users, 276,582 evaluations submitted and 137,910 answers given. In addition to this, an enormous gain in knowledge can be recorded, which ranges from a developed process of content creation, over the continuous operation at the institute, up to the specification of legal questions regarding the automated creation of individual exams.

This has created a basis for the development of further solutions that drive the digital transformation of teaching and can cope with situations like the current one.

CIIS Supports HR Tech Startup Catch Talents

The HR-Tech Startup Catch Talents, together with CIIS and Prof. Dr. Christoph Rosenkranz, is developing a software that helps small and medium-sized companies to operate an efficient personnel recruitment and to adapt the selection of applicants as closely as possible to the company's goals.

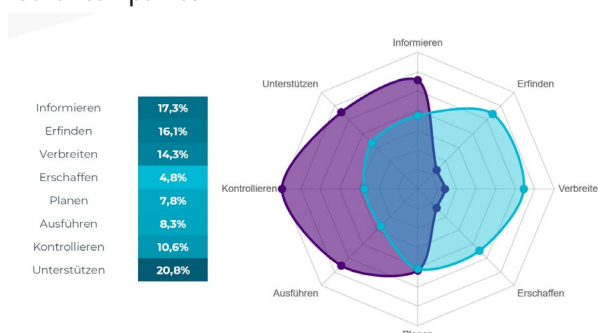
The customers simply integrate the developed candidate management system on their company website. With just a few clicks, a job advertisement with the desired requirement and personality profile is published directly on the company's own website and a variety of suitable online channels.

Candidates from all channels can now apply using the form integrated on the company website. At the same time, the intelligent matching algorithm scans the connected talent community based on the requirements defined by the company. This community is filled by all company participants together with potential candidates. Candidates who do not receive a positive response during the application process can then apply for other positions in the community. In this way, every company benefits from the greater reach that can be achieved together with other companies.

The ISA Method® personality analysis developed by Catch Talents especially for this purpose not only evaluates the professional suitability of the candidates during the application process, but also their personal suitability for the respective position, thus allowing a personnel decision based on key figures.



The two founders of Catch Talents – Justin Bous (25) and Marco Verhoeven (26) – received an EXIST startup grant in 2017, which was supplemented in the further course of 2019 by a second support program for university start-ups. Throughout the entire period, CIIS supported the two founders with input, know-how and its network in building their own company. Prof. Dr. Christoph Rosenkranz in particular made a significant contribution to the product and its further development through his commitment as a sponsor professor.



CIIS@Home Virtual Drinkouts

Covid-19 deprived our institute's team of two of our most essential sources of mental well-being: social interactions and reasons for drinking beer. Therefore, it did not take long until we arranged our first virtual drinkout session. Conversation topics, for once, deliberately not revolved around research: Instead, we talked about things like what to put in the background of your webcam shot for the best impression at video calls, and the

wide variety of beers everyone brought to the drinkout. One of our colleagues even saved her beer from last year's ICIS goody bag for this special occasion.

Later, we discovered the wonderful world of online multiplayer browser games, which miraculously still continue to exist even though Flash Player has been dead for years now. Nevertheless, games like Curve Fever (some may know it as

Achtung, die Kurve!) can be surprisingly fun. I guess when we can meet again in a Cologne Brauhaus everyone has to bring their laptop for a rematch.

Prost!

"We want to help the many small and medium-sized companies out there to find suitable candidates quickly. Even when resources are scarce and know-how may be lacking in this area," says Marco Verhoeven.

Since September 2019, the Catch Talents software has been in daily use at around 30 medium-sized companies. The customers report a considerable reduction in the time required and an increase in the number of candidates and their quality. The young team would like

to grow further this year by cooperating with industry associations and regional business networks: "It is important to us that we offer medium-sized companies a solution that is specifically developed for them and adapted to their needs - this is only possible if the companies are directly involved in the further development of the software," says Justin Bous.

As a next step, the two founders plan to take an initial investment to expand their own resources and drive the development of their startup.

Mentored EXIST team "Vytal" wins award as Best Startup 2020

The startup team "Vytal", founded by Dr Tim Breker and Sven Witthöft and mentored by Prof Jan Recker, won the EHI Foundation science award for „Best Startup 2020“, including prize money of Eur 50,000. Vytal is an EXIST-funded startup team operating out of the Excellence Start-up Center GATEWAY by the University of Cologne.

VYTAL operates a digital reusable packaging system with premium, 100%-leak proof bowls for take-out and delivery food. It serves canteen operators, restaurants, supermarkets and delivery services that use the bowls in a Packaging-as-a-Service model and on a pay-per-filling basis. For consumers VYTAL is comparable to sharing services: Consumers register in an app or buy an offline member card to receive their food in VYTAL bowls and return them to any partner outlet where the bowls are locally cleaned. No cash-out or deposit is needed for the bowl because all transactions run digitally with smart labels and on a newly developed technology platform. This enables

VYTAL to use nudging, incentives, gamification and promotions to motivate quick returns, thereby maximizing bowl utilization and sustainability impact.

Information systems professor Jan Recker has been mentoring the EXIST start-up team in particular with design research and advice on how to use eco-nudging and gamification principles in the app and platform to maximize utilization and the ecological impact of the solution.



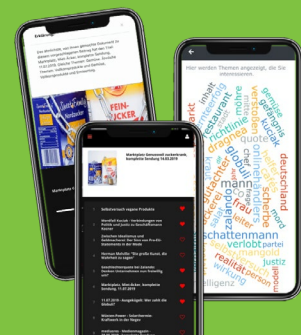
First user testings in the research project Radio Innovations

In cooperation with Deutschlandradio, the Department of Information Systems and Information Management researches individualized news radio.

In the last semester, for the first time, a larger user test was conducted as part of the Advanced Seminar for Master students.

We tested a previously developed prototype that plays an individualized/diverse audio stream of the Deutschlandfunk (DLF), ensures control mechanisms for users and features explanations. These implications are based on the editorial guidelines of the DLF and guarantee the compliance with the public service remit.

A total of 34 test persons, a mixture of DLF listeners and non-listeners, tested and evaluated the prototype. Within face-to-face interviews we examined how a individualized news radio stream is perceived and which concepts contribute to the acceptance of individualized radio. It turned out that the more transparent the recommendations were presented and the more extensive the configuration was possible by users, the higher the acceptance of the users. Overall, we received positive feedback on our prototypical individualized radio. We are following up these initial results in order to conduct further tests on a quantitative basis.



CIIS at ECIS 2020

The 28th European Conference on Information Systems took place online from June 15th to 17th under the theme "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity in a Digitizing World: Values and Ethical Perspectives". The ECIS is an annual Information Systems conference that offers academics and practitioners an international platform for the exchange

and discussion of current research results. The CIIS was intensively represented at this year's event: Alexander Herwig presented an exploratory case study of PANORAMA a global learning partnership for sustainable development and nature conservation. Janina Weingarth presented a research-in-progress paper on IT-business alignment practices as enactments of dynamic capabilities in the

context of digital transformation. Stefan Hirschmeier, Johannes Melsbach, Sven Stahlmann and Prof. Dr. Detlef Schoder presented a novel approach for multi-label multi-class document classification. Roman Zeiss organized a panel debate to reflect on and discuss sustainability practices of the Information Systems research community. All conference papers can be retrieved online free of charge from the conference proceedings.

Selected Conference Publications*

Dreesen, T., Diegmann, P., and Rosenkranz, C. 2020. "The Impact of Modes, Styles, and Congruence of Control on Agile Teams: Insights from a Multiple Case Study," in Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, pp. 6247–6256 (doi: 10.24251/HICSS.2020.764). (Won Best Paper Award)

Diegmann, P., Dreesen, T., and Rosenkranz, C. 2020. "In for a Penny, in for a Pound? A Lifecycle Model for Agile Teams," in Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (doi: 10.24251/HICSS.2020.760).

Gerber, A., Derckx, P., Döppner, D. A., and Schoder, D. 2020. "Conceptualization of the Human-Machine Symbiosis – A Literature Review," in Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (doi: 10.24251/HICSS.2020.036).

Herwig, A. 2020. "Towards a PANORAMA of Sustainable Solutions: Exploring a Global Learning Partnership for Sustainable Development," in Proceedings of the 28th European Conference on Information Systems.

Hirschmeier, S., Melsbach, J., Schoder, D., and Stahlmann, S. 2020. "Improving Recall and Precision in Unsupervised Multi-Label Document Classification Tasks by Combining Word Embeddings with TF-IDF," in Proceedings of the 28th European Conference on Information Systems.

Hirschmeier, S., and Tilly, R. 2020. "Consumers' Need for Negative Product Information Before Reading Reviews," in Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (doi: 10.24251/HICSS.2020.508).

Spindeldreher, K., Schlagwein, D., and Schoder, D. 2020. "How Is Information Systems Research Justified?," in Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (doi: 10.24251/HICSS.2020.695).

Weingarth, J., Richter, J., and Rosenkranz, C. 2020. "Exploring Alignment Practices in Digital Transformation: A Dynamic Capabilities Perspective," in Proceedings of the 28th European Conference on Information Systems.

* A full publication list is available online: <https://ciis.uni-koeln.de/en/research/publications>

A Request for Information Becomes a Three-Part Primer on the Digitalization of the Energy Transition

Imagine if your job became vastly more difficult because of the advent of clean energy.

Electricity forecasters must always ensure that supply and demand are well in balance. Until recently, that challenge fell mostly on the demand side of the equation. For close to a century, electricity grid infrastructure and market operators have relied on a fairly predictable output of reliable power generation originating in centralized power plants.

But as more power is supplied by weather-influenced wind farms, more drivers buy power-hungry electric vehicles, and more homeowners install behind-the-meter solar, the puzzle of matching electricity supply-and-demand has morphed from a 1000-piece picture to a single-color 3D-puzzle with moving parts.

Information systems to the rescue! The digitalization of the energy landscape is offering demand flexibility in many forms, ranging from the use of EV batteries as 'virtual power plants' to the facilitation of dynamic pricing in spot electricity markets. Companies like Next Kraftwerke (<https://www.next-kraftwerke.de>) and Jedlix (<https://www.jedlix.com>) are answering a critical need of electricity transmission and distribution operators while providing new cost savings to large industry and individuals alike.

But the marriage of two different cultures - the conservative ethos of

'keep the lights on' utilities with the 'move fast and break things' world of algorithms - requires some mutual learning.

When Professor Wolfgang Ketter (<https://wolfketter.com>), Chaired Professor of Information Systems and co-Director of the Institute of Energy Economics was approached by industry magazine Future Grid Solutions (<http://futuregridsolutions.co.uk/the-complexities-of-managing-critical-infrastructure>), what began as a request for information on the latest developments in energy flexibility services became a three-part series on the challenges of maintaining a reliable grid during the energy transition and the solutions IS technology is providing.

Businesses and policymakers who are interested in deepening their understanding of the implications of the digitalization of energy should consider following the University of Cologne Diploma Programme in Smart Energy (<https://www.business-school.uni-koeln.de/de/zertifikatsprogramme/smart-energy>).

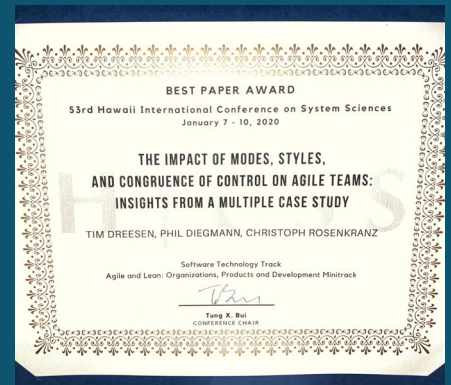
„Best Paper“ Award at the 53th HICSS Conference

At this year’s Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), a research group of the Chair of Integrated Information Systems (Christoph Rosenkranz, Phil Hennel,



and Tim Dreesen) received the „Best Paper“ Award in the track „Software Technology“.

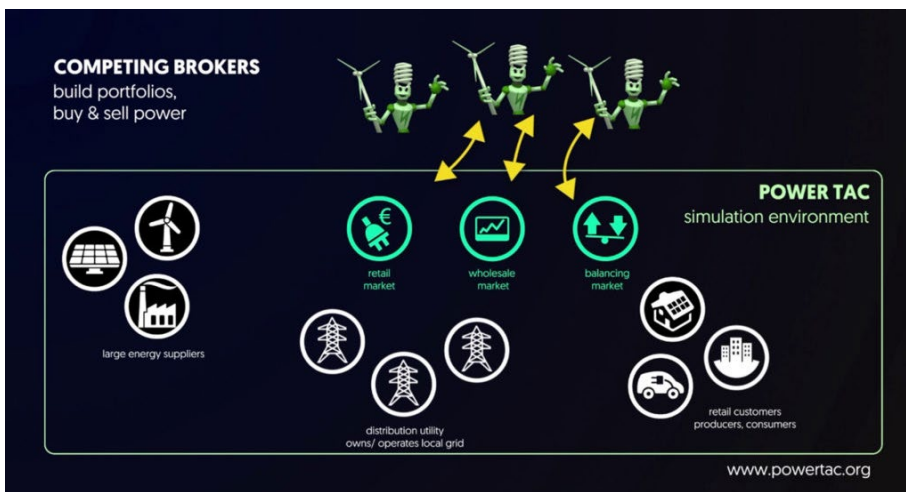
The research project presented there deals with the topic of control and its effects in agile software development teams. The full reference to the article can be found in the conference publication section.



The 2020 PowerTAC Tournament: A Retail Electricity Trading Simulation Platform Celebrates its 10th Birthday

As the world transitions to electric vehicles and renewable energy, electricity grids and markets struggle to keep supply and demand in balance. New energy policies, technologies and business models make the performance of increasingly volatile retail electricity markets even more difficult to predict.

with researchers, tournament teams, and business” said Ketter, “so anyone interested in trying out their skills in designing a trading agent and testing it in competition should register for the trials in August and September so they’re ready for the qualifying rounds and the tournament in the Fall”.



But for ten years, Professor Wolf Ketter (Chaired Professor of Information Systems at the University of Cologne and co-Director of the Institute of Energy Economics) and his colleague Professor John Collins have used the annual Power Trading Agent Competition (TAC) (<https://powertac.org/tournament>) to create a virtual energy landscape in which researchers and companies can build on scientific theories, test trading strategies and policies, and develop new business models (<https://powertac.org/how-to-use>).

“Competition teams can work virtually, so the pandemic won’t slow the tournament down. We are always looking for more scientific collaboration

Selected Journal Publications*

Ansarin, M., Ghiassi-Farrokhal, Y., Ketter, W., and Collins, J. 2020. “The Economic Consequences of Electricity Tariff Design in a Renewable Energy Era,” *Applied Energy* (275), p. 115317 (doi: 10.1016/j.apenergy.2020.115317).

Hirschmeier, S., Beule, V., and Tilly, R. 2020. “Translating Editorial Work into Algorithms for Personalized Radio Streams,” *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, pp. 1–22 (doi: 10.1080/19376529.2019.1704760).

Janiesch, C., Rosenkranz, C., and Scholten, U. Forthcoming. “An Information Systems Design Theory for Service Network Effects,” *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*.

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Pentland, B. T., Recker, J., Wolf, J. R., and Wyner, G. Forthcoming. “Bringing Context Inside Process Research with Digital Trace Data,” *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*.

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Werder, K., Seidel, S., Recker, J., Berente, N., Gibbs, J., Abboud, N., and Benzeghadi, Y. 2020. “Data-Driven, Data-Informed, Data-Augmented: How Ubisoft’s Ghost Recon Wildlands Live Unit Uses Data for Continuous Product Innovation,” *California Management Review* (62:3), pp. 86–102 (doi: 10.1177/0008125620915290).

Zhang, J., Adomavicius, G., Gupta, A., and Ketter, W. 2020. “Consumption and Performance: Understanding Longitudinal Dynamics of Recommender Systems via an Agent-Based Simulation Framework,” *Information Systems Research* (31:1), pp. 76–101 (doi: 10.1287/isre.2019.0876).

Did we spark your interest?

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Phil Hennel and Janek Richter are at your service as contact persons - whether for questions on research, cooperations, or recruiting. You can reach us by e-mail:

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