

## Information Systems Research

### Policy on Special Issues

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Special issues of *Information Systems Research* have a threefold purpose. First, they focus on and highlight emerging interdisciplinary research phenomena that otherwise might not appear in the journal in a timely fashion. Second, they enable readers of *Information Systems Research* to access an archive of quality scholarship on this emerging topic. Third, they motivate scholars pursuing research in this emerging topic to push the limits of knowledge regarding this topical area by providing a developmental review process that is sympathetic to the difficulties of undertaking quality research in underdefined domains.

*Information Systems Research* actively encourages the submission of proposals for special issues. Such proposals must comply with the following requirements.

(1) Proposals for a special issue of *Information Systems Research* must be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief for approval.

(a) To enable comparisons of all submitted proposals, proposals will only be considered once each calendar year. Accordingly, proposals must be submitted by April 15th of each calendar year.

(b) The Editor-in-Chief will make each proposal available to the Senior Editor for Special Issues, and these two individuals (in consultation with other senior editors and, possibly, scholars with expertise in the topic area) will jointly make a decision on how many and which of the proposed special issues will be accepted.

(2) Proposers of a special issue must provide a draft call for papers to the Editor-in-Chief. The call for papers must clearly specify the goals of the special issue, the topic areas for the special issue, a listing of the scholars planned to be asked to serve as associate editors of the issue, and the timetable to be followed in the processing of papers for the special

issue. The number of associate editors to be listed should be determined from estimates of the number of manuscripts expected to be received in response to the call for papers. Further, a sufficient number of current or former associate editors of *Information Systems Research* should be listed to insure that the review process will conform to the journal's established norms and values. In addition, the call for papers must:

(a) Inform authors that their papers will receive an initial screening and that only papers that are deemed a priori to have a reasonable chance of acceptance in an accelerated review process will remain under consideration. Papers that do not pass this initial screening will not be considered further.

(b) In the case of papers that pass the initial screening, inform authors that a maximum of three reviews will be undertaken on their papers. If their papers are not accepted by the end of the third round of review, their papers will be rejected. Moreover, their papers will enter a third round of review only if the revisions to be undertaken after the second round of review are relatively straightforward.

(c) Rejected papers can be submitted as regular submissions to *Information Systems Research* only if such an action is recommended in the special issue rejection letter. A recommendation to revise and resubmit as a regular *Information Systems Research* article will only be undertaken in special circumstances, such as when a formally reviewed manuscript was found to possess a strong likelihood of acceptance but was deemed to either be a poor fit with the theme of the special issue or required revisions that, while perceived to be very doable, were unlikely to be accomplished within the special issue's accelerated review schedule.

(d) Inform authors that they must adhere to a strict schedule for submission and revision of papers. Papers that miss the deadlines will be rejected.

(e) Specify that (i) the first round of review will be provided within three months of the initial submission date, (ii) the first revision of the paper will be due within three months of the return of the first round of review, (iii) the second round of review will be provided within two months of the receipt of the first revision of the paper, (iv) the second revision of the paper will be due within two months of the receipt of the second round of review, and (v) a final decision on the paper will be made within two months of the receipt of the second revision of the paper. In proposing the timetable for the special issue, care should be taken in ensuring that deadlines do not occur during those times of the year where many colleagues who might be involved with the special issue are likely to be otherwise occupied (e.g., attending the International Conference on Information Systems). In particular, depending on the number of submissions received, proposers need to be aware that they may need to set aside a week or more of their time to screen papers initially and to put in place associate editors and reviewers.

(f) Proposers are especially encouraged to include as part of the review process a research symposium (ideally, timed with the return of first revisions) at which manuscripts are presented and discussed. *Information Systems Research* will not provide any funding for such a symposium event.

(3) Special issue proposers must be open to the submission of all types of manuscripts, i.e., review papers, conceptual papers, empirical papers, etc., as well as all research methods and epistemologies.

(4) The due date for submission of papers for a special issue must be no earlier than 9 months from the day the special issue is first publicized on *ISWorld* (and other venues) and no later than 12 months from the day the special issue is first publicized on *ISWorld* (and other venues).

(5) Proposals for special issues must be developed and submitted by at least two and no more than three coeditors, one of whom must be a current or past senior editor of *Information Systems Research*. At least one of these coeditors must demonstrate special expertise in the topic areas of the special issue. If the

special issue is accepted, the Editor-in-Chief of *Information Systems Research* reserves the right to also appoint (at the time of acceptance or at any future time) the Senior Editor for Special Issues as a coeditor of the special issue. In those cases where the Senior Editor for Special Issues does not serve as a coeditor of the special issue (which is expected to represent the majority of cases), the coeditors must keep the Senior Editor for Special Issues informed of the status and progress of the special issue as well as of critical issues that arise and key decisions that are made.

(6) On receipt of a proposal for a special issue, the Editor-in-Chief and the Senior Editor for Special Issues will make an initial decision regarding the viability of the proposal. Proposals not deemed viable may be returned to the proposers with encouragement for a revision. Proposals that are deemed viable will be distributed to the other senior editors for comments. Based on these comments, the Editor-in-Chief and the Senior Editor for Special Issues will decide whether or not the proposal is accepted.

(7) Once the Editor-in-Chief approves a proposal for a special issue, the coeditors for the special issue must obtain firm commitments from associate editors. In obtaining these commitments, the associate editors must be informed of and agree to the timetable established for the special issue. Once these commitments are gained, the proposers must return the draft call for papers to the Editor-in-Chief such that this final listing of associate editors can be approved. Only after this final approval has been gained will the proposers be able to distribute the call for papers to the information systems research community.

(8) Under no circumstances can a coeditor of a special issue be an author or a coauthor of a paper submitted for consideration as a publication in the special issue.

(9) The decision to accept, reject, or invite revisions to a paper must be made by all coeditors. In the event disputes arise between the coeditors about the disposition of a paper, the Editor-in-Chief will make the decision.

All papers accepted for a special issue will normally be published as a single issue of *Information Systems Research*. In the usual case, therefore, five to seven

papers will need to be accepted before a special issue will proceed to publication. In the event that fewer than five papers are accepted for a special issue, the special issue articles will be embedded within a regular issue of *Information Systems Research* along with

other accepted articles. In the very unusual event that more than seven papers are accepted for the special issue, the Editor-in-Chief may permit articles for the special issue to be published in two issues of *Information Systems Research*.