

## **CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS JOURNAL:**

### **MAKING THE DEVELOPING WORLD A BETTER PLACE WITH HIGH IMPACT IS RESEARCH**

#### **Background**

The practical impact that IS research can bring to real organisational and societal problem situations and their stakeholders should be of prime concern to all researchers who desire to make the world a better place. Governments and funding agencies increasingly seek evidence that the research they support does bring about valuable impacts. The United Nations has also taken a strong stance with its Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals>), which have now transitioned into the new set of Sustainable Development Goals (<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>). Indeed, the critical need for positive impact is nowhere greater than in the less developed parts of the world.

The focus of this special issue is on high impact research in the specific context of developing countries, also known as emerging economies and the global south. These countries, many of which are located in Africa, Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean and the Pacific, tend to have an underdeveloped industrial base and a low human development index relative to other, more developed countries ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developing\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developing_country)). By high impact we are referring to research that demonstrates how IS has actually made a contribution for the better in a specific problem or problem area. The impact must be tangibly measured or corroborated in terms of change or improvement in a developing country context. Further, the impact must be tightly linked to the IS part of the study. This will require the documentation of strong relationships between the IS, any stakeholders, the problem situation and the outcomes. Potential or speculative impacts, or other forms of subjunctive analysis, are not appropriate for this special issue. Further, we are not looking for purely descriptive studies that embody no theory: consistent with normative expectations for the ISJ, we expect that all papers must be methodologically sound, theoretically sound as well as demonstrating high impact in the specific context of developing countries.

#### **Focus of this Special Issue**

In order to further the good work already undertaken and to encourage the undertaking of more high impact research in developing countries, in this special issue we are looking for papers that deliberately set out to demonstrate how IS makes a difference to the lives of people (whether as individuals or in groups) in developing countries and thereby makes the developing world a better place. This kind of research must thus be strongly relevant to the practical concerns of people in developing contexts. The impact should be situated in a practical context or situation that is experienced directly by the people who live there. The problem situation needs to be defined carefully and, as a result of the research, ameliorated in some tangible way. Notwithstanding this practical focus, we expect that published papers will still adhere to the ISJ's high standards of research rigour (with respect to method) and theoretical contribution.

The range of topic areas which could be described as suitable for this special issue is far too large to list completely. However, broad areas include (but are not limited to): agriculture; medicine and health; SMEs and micro-enterprises; mobile and electronic commerce applications; microfinance; crowd-sourcing; sustainability. What is critical is that the research should be indigenously situated in a developing country context. Moreover, the context should inform the research design (including theory to be tested or developed): the context is not merely a place to gather data.

In order to encourage more authors from the developing countries themselves to participate in this special issue, we will be offering a mentoring programme that pairs author teams with volunteer mentors. We expect that while the mentor will be a co-author of the paper, s/he should not be the first author of the paper.

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**Deadlines:**

Call for Papers Issued: February 2016

Initial interest to act as a mentor: April 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. Please indicate any preferences you have for the topics, methods, etc. that you would be comfortable mentoring. Please communicate your willingness to be a mentor directly with the Special Issue Co-Senior Editors.

Initial interest to be mentored: April 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. Please provide as much information about your proposed submission so that we can locate a more suitable mentor. For example, please send us an extended abstract that includes research motivation/purpose/questions, outline of the background, methodology and research design, and as much of the findings as you have available. This initial submission should be formatted according to ISJ norms and submitted through the manuscript central website – see below.

Initial submission of complete papers – December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016

Completion of 1<sup>st</sup> round of reviews – March 2017

Revisions due: June 2017

Completion of 2<sup>nd</sup> round of reviews – Sept 2017

(Final) revisions due December 2017

Final decisions – January 2018

**Submissions:**

All papers must be submitted at the ISJ's online paper submission website, viz.:  
<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/isj>