The Dark Side of Information Technology:
Mini-track Introduction

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Abstract

Researchers and practitioners have started understanding that the use of Information technologies (IT) can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they provide benefits to individuals, organizations and societies. On the other, technologies can produce adverse and often unexpected consequences for individuals, organizations and societies. Much research has been devoted to the possible positive aspects of technologies, such as increased productivity and performance. Only in recent years we start seeing systematic research on possible negative aspects and consequences of technology use, dubbed as the "dark side" of IT use. This mini-track aims at expanding this line of work and helping researchers and practitioners to better understand, and possibly tackle, the "dark side" of IT use.

1. Overview

Information technology (IT) use and implementations in the workplace and society have typically been viewed as beneficial, yet recent studies and observations have revealed worrying evidence that IT use may also be hiding a potentially serious dark side. In other words, IT use may lead to a host of negative consequences with varying degrees of severity for individuals, firms and societies.

This track embraces the exploration of a variety of IT usage behaviors and hopes to act as an open forum for the emerging results around the duality in the consequences of IT use and unraveling the dark side of IT use. Given the ubiquitous and obligatory nature of IT use in organizations, the prevalence of use among at-risk populations such as children, and these early findings, it is imperative that the IS research community take upon itself the rigorous examination of dark side of IT use.

The "Dark Side of IT" mini-track welcomes theoretical and empirical papers examining alternative consequences of IT use and implementation in organizations and societies. The objective of this mini-track is to focus not only on the antecedents, development processes, consequence of numerous phenomena related to the dark side of IT use but also the potential strategies and techniques for behavioral interventions. We seek to provide practitioners (e.g., IT developers, managers, psychologists, and policy makers) in a multitude of contexts with a deeper understanding of the potential consequences and possible interventions pertaining to the dark side of IT use based on this forum of discussion.

Over time a host of new dark side of IT phenomena have emerged, and hence the focus and goal of this mini-track has evolved to welcome topics that focus on a variety of IT-related phenomena which may be potentially harmful such as the following topics:

- IT-related addictions
- Cyber loafing,
- Cyber bullying
- Deceptive computer-mediated communication
- Disrupted work life balance
- IT interruptions
- IT misuse
- Technostress
- Impulsive use of IT
- Physiological effects of IT use

The first paper in Session 1 of the mini-track, "When Modern Technologies Meet Ageing Workforces: Older Workers are more affected by Demands from Mobile Interruptions than their Younger Counterparts" examines the differences between older and younger workers' technology usage in the face of frequent interruptions and related job stress. By focusing on how older and younger workers manage technology-mediated interruptions the authors find evidence of differences in how workers from different generations adjust their technology usage in the face of these interruptions.

The second paper in Session 1, "Take Control of Interruptions in Your Life: Lessons from Routine Activity Theory of Criminology" examines the

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development and frequency of interruptions that an individual perceives from their mobile phones. Utilizing routine activity theory, the authors find evidence that the frequency of perceived interruptions an individual is subjected to is not based simply on the number of applications used on their devices but a combination of the sources of interruptions, the ability to be interrupted based on an individual's usage environment, and the number of tools used to reduce interruption opportunities.

The third paper in Session 1, "From IT Addiction to Discontinued Use: A Cognitive Dissonance Perspective" focuses on exploring the intentions of IT addicts to discontinue their usage and the perceptions of guilt and self-efficacy to discontinue their use that ultimately impacts their ability to reduce or stop usage. By examining the impact of an individual's cognitive dissonance, or discomfort based on the alignment between their behaviors and their beliefs, the authors find evidence that the perceptions of guilt and self-efficacy to reduce usage are mediated by the level of discomfort an individual perceives through cognitive dissonance.

The first paper in Session 2, "Understanding Consumers' Reactance of Personalized Online Advertising Services: from a Perspective of Negative Effects" attempts to examine consumers' reactance toward online personalized advertising from the perspective of negative effects. By leveraging rational choice theory in the context of reactance, the study identifies a host of rational choice factors and tests their impacts on consumers' reactance. Moreover, the study examines the extent to which affective factors influence rational choice factors.

The final paper in Session 2, "Linking User Age and Stress in the Interruption Era: The Role of Computer Experience" explores the effect of technology-mediated interruptions on employee stress in the face of our aging workforce. This study examines the ability for aging workers to handle these interruptions through their prior computer experience which allows workers to alleviate and manage frequent interruptions and subsequently reduce stress.