

Introduction to Making Digital Transformation Real

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Abstract

The sixth year of the "Making Digital Transformation (DT) Real" minitrack offers a platform to engage in and contribute to discussions about DT from an applied point of view in information systems literature. This editorial provides a brief introduction to DT and the relevance to make it real, as well as an overview of selected papers.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation (DT) remains relevant for businesses in all industry sectors and implies organizational changes at many levels. These changes in corporate transformation are leveraged by digital technologies impacting value proposition redefinition (Wessel et al., 2021) and helping organizations redefine their purpose in society (Bordeleau et al., 2021).

Access to digital technologies is no longer an issue (Rowe, 2018) for organizations, but the capabilities to extract its value persist as a challenge since it depends on the context of use and the capabilities of people that will use (Bordeleau et al., 2021; Wessel et al., 2021).

For all these reasons, DT is a top priority for practitioners and continues to be a contemporary IS phenomenon. Making Digital Transformation Real minitrack presents seven contributions integrating the complexity generated by DT at different levels.

2. Contributions

Our Making Digital Transformation Real minitrack presents seven papers coauthored by 24 colleagues. We received 11 submissions and accepted 7. Our minitrack as in previous years, most authors are European, more than half of whom are German. This year, we have no accepted paper coming from an institution outside of Europe. We can see how this topic has been a priority in Europe, especially in Germany, driving the world to

discuss Industry 4.0, which represents the DT in the manufacturing sector, since 2011 (Schwab, 2016).

All the papers have adopted qualitative research approaches, such as case study research and employed different theoretical lenses to deeply examine DT and offer new perspectives and a better understanding of this phenomenon. As last year, we would be delighted to receive next year's papers about impacts that can be isolated and measured across large n samples. The papers included in this year's minitrack are summarized below.

Geffers, Bretschneider, Eilers & Oeste-Reiß (2024) present a paper entitled "Leading Teams in Today's Dynamic Organizations: The Core Characteristics of Agile Leadership." The objective is to explore leadership practices in agile organizations. They provide a conceptualization based on core characteristics, analyzed through a senior executive training program. Their findings categorize Agile Leadership into five perspectives: person-based, purpose-based, result-based, position-based, and process-based. Agile leadership, as they present it, is crucial for guiding business transformations, thereby enhancing adaptability and overall success (Geffers et al., 2024).

Sabljić (2024), "The Role of Organizational Structure in Digital Transformation Outcomes," explores the impact of organizational centralization on the success of DT. The study initially posits that centralization facilitates the coordination of the transformation process. However, the findings reveal a different twist: as the transformation process unfolds, a less centralized structure is correlated with more favorable outcomes. The study points out that technology assets and culture have been identified as success factors in DT, but the role of organizational structure remains largely unexplored, being studied primarily as an outcome. (Sabljić, 2024).

Viljoen, Przybilla, Hein, Keilbach & Krcmar (2024) present a paper entitled "Unpacking Digital Transformation Tensions through Workers' Perceptions: A Technological Frame and Paradox Theory Approach." The author's aim is to shed light on

the root cause of organizational tensions by analyzing individual perceptions of DT. This is crucial as differing perceptions could potentially lead to resistance towards DT and hinder successful technology integration. The study identified three key aspects of DT perceptions: the rationale behind DT, individual contributions to DT, and the communication surrounding DT. These aspects were found to correlate with various types of organizational tensions. Gaining a more concrete understanding of how DT perceptions contribute to organizational tensions is vital for ensuring a successful DT process (Viljoen et al., 2024).

Fischer, Papert, Gimnich & Goertler (2024) present a paper entitled " Travelling the Digital Journey: A Literature Review and Framework for Change Management Actions and Tools in Digital Transformation." The authors address change management actions and tools that support the DT journey and translate these into a comprehensive framework. This framework aims to provide advanced techniques for managing changes in a highly dynamic context. The authors identify actions that facilitate DT and propose a framework that takes into account the varying contexts of different sizes and structures, as well as those known for their levels of inertia and rigidity (Fischer et al., 2024a).

Salonen & Fonstad (2024) present a paper entitled "Digital Transformation of a Manufacturing Company in Light of the Digital Innovation Theory." This paper explores the transformation of a manufacturing company into a digital innovator, guided by the principles of digital innovation theory. It emphasizes the importance of customer value, positioning it at the heart of the theoretical framework. The paper not only enriches digital innovation theory but also offers practical insights for business executives managing the transformation process. The shift from being a product innovator to a digital innovator presents a multifaceted challenge that impacts the entire company. This paper provides a comprehensive understanding of these challenges and the strategies to navigate them (Salonen & Fonstad, 2024).

Fischer, Goertler & Rennert (2024) present a paper entitled "Developing a Process Model for Digital Transformation – Insights from a multiple cross-industry case study." The aim of this paper is to explore how a specific process model can assist companies and organizations in implementing digital transformations in a structured and timely manner. The goal is to enhance the transparency of the DT process, thereby reducing its complexity. Still, many companies lack the knowledge to design and implement DT effectively. The findings provide a concrete process model for supporting DT, including five phases: initiating, analyzing, debating,

acting and evaluating the change to provide guidance for practitioners undertaking DT (Fischer et al., 2024b).

Pitman, Koponen & Tarkiainen (2024) present a paper entitled "Winning in B2B Sales in the Digital Economy: A Systematic Literature Review and the Dynamic Capabilities Approach." The objective is to analyze how business-to-business (B2B) firms succeed in DT with a lens of dynamic capabilities. They identify seven key dynamic capabilities that are crucial for managers to focus on in order to achieve success in B2B sales within the digital economy. The study emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive review of existing literature and the strategic application of dynamic capabilities, given the evolving landscape of the B2B sales marketplace (Pitman et al., 2024).

3. Conclusion

Making Digital Transformation Real presents the sixth 'round' of papers at HICSS, with seven relevant papers discussing and questioning many aspects of organizational transformation. This paper series on DT showcases the latest research insights from seven papers that explore various aspects of organizational change in the digital era. These papers are not meant to be comprehensive but rather to highlight some of the emerging issues and directions for future research. As DT affects businesses, society, and individuals, we argue that this topic will continue to be relevant and important in the coming years. Therefore, we call for more research to advance the theoretical understanding and practical implications of DT for different stakeholders and new frontiers on DT (Baiyere et al., 2021).

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