Research in the Attention Economy

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"We are living in exponential times" is a commonly used saying to express the dramatic changes due to digitalization. For sure, this saying also applies to research and research publications. For researchers in Business and Information Systems Engineering, the "International Conference on Information Systems" (ICIS) is certainly one of the largest and probably also as the most prestigious gathering of information systems academics and research-oriented practitioners in the world. ICIS 2019, which was held in Germany for the first time, was a stunning success. The community has to thank the Conference Chairs Jane Fedorowicz and Helmut Krcmar, their Program Co-Chairs Wai Fong Boh, Jan Marco Leimeister and Sunil Wattal, and many, many more for organizing an impressing and inspiring conference.

ICIS 2019, in Munich, came with an "all-time high everywhere: number of submissions, number of participants, conference innovations such as different formats, adjunct workshops, industry sponsoring etc." (Quote: Jan Marco Leimeister). To be more specific, ICIS 2019

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counted a total of 1548 submissions (almost 10% more submissions than in the previous year 2018: 1411 submissions), from which 420 papers were accepted for presentation. Broken down to the individual countries participating in ICIS 2019 it is notable that the German community submitted and presented the highest number of papers ($\sim$ 120 papers accepted), followed by USA ($\sim$ 80 papers accepted) and China ($\sim$ 40 papers accepted). To handle the huge volume of papers and information, 76 Track Chairs recruited a total of 706 Associate Editors, who again enlisted 2409 reviewers to conduct over 3700 reviews.

Altogether, ICIS 2019 was a huge success, giving researchers from all over the world the opportunity to present their latest research to the international Information Systems (IS) community. However, due to the high volume of contributions, it was hard for participants to keep track of all 420 papers plus a plethora of contributions discussed in adjunct workshops.

In general, it is getting increasingly harder to follow all the different research developments and to consider all the latest insights that researchers all over the world generate. Neighboring disciplines face the same challenge: In the Management discipline, for instance, more than 10,000 scholars, authors, students and practitioners gather in annual meetings (e.g., AoM) to connect and explore ideas about management and organizational scholarship. Against this background, one can certainly argue that we are doing research in an "attention economy".

The concept of the attention economy (Simon 1969) suggests that a world rich in information leads to a scarcity of whatever that information consumes, in this case, the attention of peer researchers. Therefore, attention and the information that demands our attention need to be managed efficiently to avoid information overload (Davenport and

Fig. 1 **a** Wil van der Aalst, Martin Bichler, Paul Milgrom, and Christof Weinhardt (from left to right). **b** Audience at the joint reception

Beck 2013; Hinz et al. 2016; Shapiro and Varian 2013; Simon 1969). In academia, the increasing publication output of Management Science, Business and Computer Science scholars, and the growing number of outlets publishing research make it increasingly difficult for papers to attract sufficient attention from the research community. In fact, for the readership, it is currently impossible to honor all the good papers published by the community. Planning a day at ICIS 2019 with its 26 theme tracks, adjunct workshops and meetings, exemplifies the challenge of information richness on the one hand and the scarcity of time on the other hand.

To manage the disparity between the available information and attention scarcity, researchers and practitioners have investigated ways to improve the information allocation process. In this regard, researchers explored applications aimed at enhancing the control or customization of information (Huberman and Wu 2008; Shapiro and Varian 2013). The ICIS 2019 App (which was undoubtedly useful to navigate through the event) and Google Scholar are only two examples of such applications, which are very helpful but sometimes need to be used with some caution. Similar to Google Scholar, for instance, many other recommendation-type applications often favor highly cited papers, creating a so-called "the-rich-get-richer-feedback loop" (Hinz and Eckert 2010) and path dependencies that can ultimately shape research domains in unintended ways.

This insight is in line with Falkinger (2007) who developed a theoretical model that described the structure of competition for attention. Assuming a world rich with information but with limited available attention, Falkinger finds that international integration and progress in information technologies tend to decrease global diversity and subjects' attention levels.

In such an environment brands play an important role in attracting the readerships' limited attention. While ICIS, MIS Quarterly, Information Systems Research, Journal of Management Information Systems are well-established brands within our research community, Business & Information Systems Engineering (BISE) is relentlessly pushing forward to become one of the attention attracting landmarks and the leading IS journal in Europe.

BISE's constant efforts to become one of the leading journals in IS have already been very effective and BISE enjoys an ever increasing and well-deserved attention from the community: The 5-years impact factor of BISE rose from 3.248 in 2016 to 5.281 in 2018. Additionally, the number of paper downloads published in BISE through the BISE portal increased to 288,639 in 2018, corresponding to about 1000 downloaded articles each working day. At the same time, we were able to reduce the length of the first review round by almost 38% – i.e., from 80 days in 2016 to only 58 days in 2018.

Following ICIS 2019, BISE celebrated its 60th anniversary in a joint reception together with Workshop on Information Technology and Systems (WITS) and Workshop on Information Systems and Economics (WISE) subsequent to ICIS 2019, which was a good opportunity to promote our journal to the very best experts in our field (see Fig. 1a, b). The reception, organized by Martin Bichler and Tobias Kretschmer, took place in Schloss Nymphenburg in Munich. Christof Weinhardt presented the BISE journal to the audience followed by Paul Milgrom from Stanford University, who gave an inspiring keynote and exemplified how researchers from our and neighboring domains can impact policy-making and business practice. BISE Vice-EiC Wil van der Aalst delivered a very well-received academic keynote at the WITS conference organized by Martin Bichler and Wolf Ketter. Overall, this outreach event was another successful step in our internationalization agenda.

Lastly, the BISE editorial team is pleased to see the positive development of the journal and will continue to work towards establishing BISE as one of the leading brands in our domain, so that ultimately, the research published in BISE receives the attention it deserves.

Against this backdrop, we invite you to submit your very best work to BISE in 2020 and beyond. We are looking forward to your contributions!

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