

AMCIS 2007 Panel Proposal

Undergraduate Information Systems Model Curriculum Revision: Rethinking the Approach and the Process

Abstract

The panel will give the information systems community a status update of the recently launched joint ACM/AIS undergraduate IS curriculum revision effort and an opportunity to participate in the revision process. The panel will consist of the members of the ACM/AIS task force leading the project, and it will begin with a discussion on the factors that motivate this revision. We will continue with a description of three core themes that the task force believes are critically important for the revision process: expanding the scope of the model curriculum beyond schools of business/management, providing more flexibility to schools adopting the curriculum by separating the core of the curriculum from career track electives, and using Web 2.0 technologies to create a platform for ongoing curriculum maintenance.

Brief Outline

Motivating the revision of the undergraduate IS Model Curriculum
Expanding the Model Curriculum beyond Business Schools
Providing more flexibility by separating the core from career track electives
Using Web 2.0 technologies for ongoing curriculum maintenance

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Planned Activities

The panel will give the information systems community a status update of the recently launched joint ACM/AIS undergraduate IS curriculum revision effort and an opportunity to participate in the revision process. The panel will consist of the members of the ACM/AIS task force leading the project.

We will start with a discussion on the factors that motivate the revision. One of them is simply time: the detailed groundwork for the IS'97 model curriculum took place already in mid-1990s, and in terms of the curriculum content, IS2002 was a relatively minor update of IS'97. Since the time the content of the current curriculum was developed, the field has experienced dramatic changes in technology, business environment, and the geographic and cultural scope of IT work. A revision is clearly overdue just based on the changes in the context. Many within our field also believe that a model curriculum revision is needed to help departments and programs increase enrollments.

The rest of the panel will focus on three core themes that the task force believes are critically important for the revision process: expanding the scope of the model curriculum beyond schools of business/management, providing more flexibility to schools adopting the curriculum by separating the core of the curriculum from career track electives, and using Web 2.0 technologies to create a platform for ongoing curriculum maintenance. These will be described briefly below.

Most members of the AIS community are affiliated with schools of business. The strong linkage to business schools is reflected in the current IS model curriculum, which was specifically designed to fit the requirements of a business program accredited by AACSB. For many, the core identity of the information systems discipline is linked to the business context, even though it has always been acknowledged that there are high quality IS programs outside business schools. The panel will present the following thesis for discussion: The new IS model curriculum should be flexible enough to fit the needs of all academic programs that share the interest in applying expertise in computing and information sciences to a specific application domain.

The current IS model curriculum consist of 10 required courses without any flexibility. Obviously, different schools implement it in different ways, but the model curriculum does not separate core material from electives. The task force believes that the discipline needs to specify a smaller core with a structure that makes it possible to define career tracks serving a variety of different audiences.

The task force firmly believes that the current model of conducting relatively infrequent but comprehensive curriculum revision projects is outdated. We will demonstrate during the presentation the current status of the efforts to develop a new model for curriculum development and maintenance. This model will use Web 2.0 technologies to enable an ongoing open, community-based curriculum development process with sufficient editorial control and periodic formal approval processes.

Throughout the panel, the audience is strongly encouraged to participate. The task force hopes to use the panel as one of the mechanisms to motivate the IS community to become very actively involved in the process.

Panelist Information

Jay Nunamaker is Regents and Soldwedel Professor of MIS, Computer Science and Communication, and Director of the Center for the Management of Information at the University of Arizona, Tucson. His research on group support systems addresses behavioral as well as engineering issues and focuses on theory as well as implementation. Dr. Nunamaker founded the MIS department (3rd and 4th nationally ranked MIS department) at the University of Arizona and established campus-wide instructional computer labs that have attracted academic leaders in the MIS field to the university faculty. He received his PhD in system engineering and operations research from Case Institute of Technology, an MS and BS in engineering from the University of Pittsburgh, and a BS from Carnegie Mellon University. He is a registered professional engineer.

Janice Sipior is Associate Professor of Management Information Systems at Villanova University. Her research interests include ethical and legal aspects of information technology, system development strategies, and knowledge management. Her research has been published in over 65 refereed journals, international conference proceedings, and books. She is Chair of the Association for Computing Machinery - Special Interest Group on Management Information Systems (ACM-SIGMIS). She served as a Senior Editor of Data Base, an Associate Editor of Information Resources Management Journal, and is currently the editor-in-chief of Information Systems Management.

Heikki Topi (co-chair) is Associate Professor and Chair of Computer Information Systems at Bentley College. His research has been published in journals such as *European Journal of Information Systems*, *JASIST*, *Information Processing & Management*, *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, *Journal of Database Management*, *Small Group Research*, and others. He has been actively involved in national computing curriculum development and evaluation efforts (including IS2002 and CC2005 Overview Report). Currently, he is a member of the ACM Education Board and co-chair of the IS curriculum revision project.

Joe Valacich (co-chair) is The George and Carolyn Hubman Distinguished Professor in MIS at Washington State University. He served on the national task forces to design *IS '97* and *2002: The Model Curriculum and Guidelines for Undergraduate Degree Programs in Information Systems* as well as *MSIS 2000* and *2006: The Master of Science in Information Systems Model Curriculum*. He also served on the Executive Committee, funded by NSF, to define the *IS Program Accreditation Standards* and on the Board of Directors for CSAB (formally, the Computing Sciences Accreditation Board), representing the Association for Information Systems (AIS). He was the general conference co-chair for the 2003 International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) in Seattle and was the vice-chair of ICIS 1999 in Charlotte, NC. He is a prolific writer, with more than 60 scholarly journal publications as well as several best-selling textbooks.

Target Audience

The target audience of this panel is very broad: we believe the panel will be of interest to any IS faculty member or practitioner who is interested in IS education. The project that this panel covers is critically important for the IS community and should attract a large audience (potentially more than 50 participants).