

*Call for Papers*

**MIS Quarterly Executive Special Issue on Optimizing the Digital Workforce**

This is a reminder that the December 2018 issue of *MISQ Executive (MISQE)* will be dedicated to academic research on the theme of *Optimizing the Digital Workforce*.

The purpose of the special issue is to explore the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing digital workforce. Whereas in the past, we debated definitions, skills, and composition of the IT Workforce<sup>2, 6, 9</sup>, we now must consider a future inhabited by a diversely skilled, global, and often-virtual workforce, customer base, and society that is intertwined with mixed-reality, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and drones as co-workers<sup>3, 7, 8, 11, 12</sup>. Globally, the numbers and complexity will grow, for instance, in the USA alone:

*Employment of computer and information technology occupations is projected to grow 12 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. These occupations are expected to add about 488,500 new jobs, from about 3.9 million jobs to about 4.4 million jobs from 2014 to 2024, in part due to a greater emphasis on cloud computing, the collection and storage of big data, more everyday items becoming connected to the Internet in what is commonly referred to as the “Internet of things,” and the continued demand for mobile computing. (Occupational Outlook Handbook, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Dec. 2015)<sup>1</sup>*

To add to the complexity of optimizing the traditional IT workforce, the *digital workforce* includes millions of knowledge workers and customers performing IT development work or co-creating products and services. These individuals may or not qualify as included in existing definitions of the IT workforce<sup>5, 8, 9, 15, 17</sup>.

The old challenges of recruiting, motivating, developing, and retaining skilled workers both inside and outside the formal IT function continue, but are shifting in their co-evolution with IT<sup>4, 9, 11</sup>. The PwC 2016 report on IT Leadership Issues includes “IT talent management” as among their top ten<sup>4</sup>. Human capital management in today’s organizations is challenged by evolving recruiting and digital talent metrics, dissimilar expectations of an increasingly multi-generational, multi-cultural labor force, continued gender inequality, social inclusion, and the aging out of knowledge workers in many economic sectors<sup>3, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 15, 16</sup>. By 2022, the baby boom cohort will be 58-75 years of age, with their participation in the civil labor force predicted to increase to over 25%<sup>14</sup>.

The World Economic Forum has as one of their many focal areas “Shaping the Future of Education, Gender, and Work”<sup>15</sup>. They ask, “*How can talent be developed and deployed to ensure that more than 7 billion people can fulfill their potential?*” Their 2017 report highlights three global challenges facing organizations and society in developing and deploying human capital:

*1) Globalization and technology are accelerating job creation and destruction, with estimates that a third of skillsets required to perform jobs will be wholly new by 2020.*

*2) Education and training systems, having remained largely static for decades, are not keeping pace with these shifts... Some studies suggest that 65% of children entering primary school today will have jobs that do not yet exist and for which their education will fail to prepare them, exacerbating skills gaps and unemployment in the future workforce.*

*3) Outdated cultural norms and institutional inertia create roadblocks for half of the world's talent. These factors together exacerbate income inequality and fuel political and social turmoil... According to the latest data, on average globally, women have less than two-thirds of the economic opportunity that men have, and the rate of progress is stalling, with current forecasts to economic parity at 170 years.*

The WEF is not alone in highlighting the importance of developing and managing human capital in the twenty-first century. PwC's survey of 2,216 business and technology executives found that organizations with more comprehensive digital strategies achieved stronger financial performance<sup>10</sup>. These digital strategies extend beyond managing technology development and execution to include managing relationships between employees, customers, and the digital environment they co-habit. In reporting on the perceived "Digital IQ" of surveyed firms, "82% of top-performing companies emphasize the human experience surrounding digital tech"<sup>10</sup>. Beyond the user experience, the complex interaction of humans and digital artifacts requires attention to new skills and work relationships. From the bottom up, as employees and customers adopt emerging social media technologies and special purpose applications (referred to as IT consumerism), the resulting IT complexity, security, and privacy issues force organizations to reconsider new work routines, enterprise tools, and human capital development opportunities<sup>4, 13</sup>.

Our objective is to examine the strategic business opportunities and management challenges associated with managing a diverse and evolving digital workforce. MIS Quarterly Executive bridges practice and research and is sponsored by the Society for Information Management and the Association for Information Systems. We are looking for submissions based on case and/or field studies that provide rich illustrations, frameworks, or lessons to guide management in successful strategies for managing this increasingly diverse, digital workforce. We welcome submissions based on both primary and secondary sources. This Special Issue of MIS Quarterly Executive (and the journal in general) seeks both original research and rigorous research published in traditional venues that have practical lessons learned for management.

Digital workforce topics may include all aspects of digital workforce management, including recruiting, developing, retaining, motivating, or compensating. It may include, but is not limited to:

- Workforce diversity, including multi-cultural and multi-generational strategies
- New digital talent metrics and talent analytics
- Remote workers and the virtual workforce, including crowdsourcing and managing virtual "crowd workers"
- Offshoring and shifting skill composition and relationships with a global workforce
- Work displacement, destruction, and creation
- How firms are flexing to manage an aging workforce and skill drain
- Skills (re)training, new work routines and human capital development opportunities
- AI, robotics, augmented/mixed-reality, and machine-human adaptation for productivity and job satisfaction
- Increasing the firm's "Digital IQ" (REF PwC) through managing user experience of customers, employees, and culture

## Submission Details

Authors should submit manuscripts to the *MISQE* website at: [www.misqe.org](http://www.misqe.org). and select the category of SPECIAL ISSUE 2018. Format guidelines and submission preparation checklists are also available on the website.

Authors may submit to the special issue regardless of their attendance or participation at the 2017 pre-ICIS or 2018 HICSS workshops. We welcome submissions across all topics, especially those focused on human resources issues moving forward.

Papers will receive a regular *MISQE* review process under the guidance of the 2018 Special Issue Guest Editors. Submissions to *MISQE* should be written for an IT executive readership and should describe practice-oriented research findings and guidelines. All authors are encouraged to look at prior published *MISQE* research articles for presentation models. All prior articles can be downloaded free by AIS and SIM members at: [www.misqe.org](http://www.misqe.org). AIS members can also access *MISQE* articles via the AIS eLibrary.

## Submission Deadlines and Important Dates:

Special Issue full paper submission deadline: **March 17, 2018**

First editorial review sent to authors: **May 7, 2018**

Paper resubmission based on editor feedback deadline: **June 30, 2018**

Second editorial review, decision, and suggestions to authors: **August 7, 2018**

Final submission of accepted papers deadline: **October 5, 2018**

*MISQE* publication: **December 2018**

## Special Issue Guest Editors:

- **Michelle Kaarst-Brown** ([mlbrow03@syr.edu](mailto:mlbrow03@syr.edu)) (*MISQE* Senior Editor)
- **Jeria Quesenberry** ([jeriaq@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:jeriaq@andrew.cmu.edu))
- **Tim Weitzel** ([tim.weitzel@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:tim.weitzel@uni-bamberg.de))
- **Fred Niederman** ([niederfa@slu.edu](mailto:niederfa@slu.edu))

## References

1. *BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook* (2015) Computer and Information Technology Occupations. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Published Thursday, December 17, 2015 Accessed Feb 28, 2017 at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/home.htm>
2. Bersin, J., Houston, J., & Kester, B. (2014) Talent analytics in practice: Go from talking to delivering on big data. *Deloitte Human Capital Trends Report 2014*. Deloitte University Press. Accessed Feb 28, 2017 at <https://dupress.deloitte.com/dup-us-en/focus/human-capital-trends/2014/hc-trends-2014-talent-analytics.html?id=gx:el:dc:dup684:cons:awa:hct14>
3. Deng, X. & Joshi, K. D. (2016). Why individuals participate in micro-task crowdsourcing work environment: Revealing crowdworkers' perceptions. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 17(10), 648-673.
4. Harris, J., Ives, B. & Junglas, I. (2012) IT Consumerization: When Gadgets Turn Into Enterprise IT Tools. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, Sept. 11(3).

5. Kappleman, L., Johnson, V., Maurer, C., McLean, E., Torres, R., & Nguyen, Q. (2016) Guest Editorial: A Preview of the 2016 SIM IT Trends Study. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, Dec, 15(4).
6. Kaarst-Brown, M.L. & Guzman, I. (2005) "Who is the IT Workforce?: Challenges Facing Policy Makers, Management, and Research". *Proceedings of ACM SIGMIS CPR - Computer Personnel Research Conference*, 1-8. Atlanta, GA.
7. Lacity, M. & Willcocks, L. (2016) Robotic Process Automation at Telefónica O2. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, March, 15(1).
8. Merisotis, J. (2016). Appreciating a multigenerational higher education IT workforce. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 51(3), 39.
9. Niederman, F., Ferratt, T. & Trauth, E. M. (2016) On the Co-Evolution of Information Technology and Information Systems Personnel. *The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems*, 47(1), 29-50.
10. PwC, (2017) *Global Digital IQ®* Accessed Feb. 16, 2017 at [http://www.pwc.com/us/en/advisory-services/digital-iq.html?icid=pwcus\\_home-new\\_hero\\_Advisory\\_Digital-IQ](http://www.pwc.com/us/en/advisory-services/digital-iq.html?icid=pwcus_home-new_hero_Advisory_Digital-IQ)
11. Quesenberry, J.L. and Trauth, E.T. (2012). "Working Where She Wants and Wanting Where She Works: Understanding Career Values and Motivations of Women in the IT Workforce." *Information Systems Journal*, (22), 457-473.
12. Su, N., Levina, N., & Ross, J. W. (2016) The long-tail strategy of IT outsourcing. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 57(2), 81-89.
13. Tripp, J. F., Riemenschneider, C., & Thatcher, J. B. (2016). Job satisfaction in agile development teams: Agile development as work redesign. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 17(4), 267-307.
14. Toosi, Mitra (2013) Labor force projections to 2022: the labor force participation rate continues to fall. *Monthly Labor Review*. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. December. Accessed Feb 28, 2017 at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/article/labor-force-projections-to-2022-the-labor-force-participation-rate-continues-to-fall.htm>
15. WEF (2017) Realizing Human Potential in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. *Report from World Economic Forum*. Accessed Feb 28, 2017 at <https://www.weforum.org/whitepapers/realizing-human-potential-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution>
16. Trauth, E.M., Quesenberry, J.L, and Huang, H. (2009). "Retaining Women in the American IT Workforce: Theorizing the Influence of Organizational Factors." *European Journal on Information Systems*, Special Issue on Meeting the Renewed Demand for IT Workers, 18, 476-497.
17. Weitzel, T., Eckhardt, A., and Laumer, S. (2009) A Framework for Recruiting IT Talent: Lessons from Siemens. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, Dec. 8(4), 175-189.