

Guest Editorial Preface

Special Issue on Research in Services and ICT

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The growing interest in e-services and mobile services was well reflected in a recent conference, RESER 2015, by the European Association for Research on Services. Besides the dedicated track “ICT’s role in service development”, the topic was also echoed in many of the other conference papers. The big interest for the relation between services and ICT witnesses that this relation is far from trivial or problem-free. Both new possibilities as well as new problems emerge when ICT is introduced in an existing service, or when ICT is used to create a new (type of) service. This special issue of International Journal of E-Services and Mobile Applications presents a small selection of the many papers presented at the RESER 2015 conference. The four papers are:

Paper 1: “The potential of workshops versus blogs for user involvement in service innovation” by Hanne Westh Nicolajsen from IT University Copenhagen, Denmark; Flemming Sørensen and Ada Scupola, both Roskilde University, Denmark. The article discusses different ways in which users may be involved in the ideation phase of service innovation and the results and limitations of such involvement. The study compares the use of a blog and two differently setup future workshops in a library. The study shows that the blog is efficient in giving the users voice whereas the mixed workshop method (involving users and employees) is particularly efficient at qualifying and further developing ideas.

Paper 2: “Online Review Site Data in Service Innovation” by Tuomo Eloranta, Aalto University, Finland. The increased emphasis of customer understanding and involvement in successful service innovation has led to development of various co-creation approaches that strive for tight coupling between customers and companies. While highly integrative methods certainly have their place, there is also a need for lighter means for gaining customer understanding amidst the organizational reality of limited budgets and time famine. The objective of the study is to examine ways of virtual customer integration, namely utilizing feedback customers give on public online review sites as a source of new ideas and inspiration for service innovation. This study brings new understanding on how firms can best leverage online review sites as a part of their customer integration tool portfolio to support their innovation activities.

Paper 3: “Gamification as an enabler of mutual learning in complex health care systems” by Johanna Leväsluoto, Jouko Heikkilä, Joonas Tuovinen and Kaupo Viitanen, all from VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd. The paper presents a gamified role switching method aiming to promote dialogue and mutual learning in health care organisations facing changes in complex systems. Two case studies with crucial the information exchange between the actors informs

the research. A number of stakeholders were interviewed and four workshops were arranged. The study indicates that the gamified role switching method inspired and gave means for the participants to enhance systemic understanding of their organization and to improve dialogue. The role switching method also made the participants to see the situation from the other perspectives and thus promoted collaboration and the change process.

Paper 4: “ICT-based or ICT-centric? Embodiment and Cognition in a Service Recovery of a Web Service Encounter” by Jannick Kirk Sørensen, Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark. Through a logbook-based self-observation of an ICT-based service journey, the failure and the co-created recovery of the ICT-based service encounter is analysed. The analysis shows the limitations of both traditional affordances-based analyses of user interaction, as well as Paul Dourish’s (2001) ‘embodied interaction’ framework. Two new categories of service encounters are subsequently suggested: 1) ‘cognitively dominated service encounters’ that characterizes types of service encounters where the customer’s reasoning plays a central part in the service encounter, and 2) ‘ICT-centric’ service encounters that are determined by the inner structure of the ICT ‘material’ to the extent that the customer must adapt to logic of the ICT-system.

Enjoy reading the special issue!

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Jannick Sørensen has a background in human computer interaction design (MA, Malmö University, 2003) and media science (PhD, 2011, University of Southern Denmark), and approaches the field of ICT service research from a design studies perspective. His aim is to bridge the fields of interaction design, service design and service research to provide a new starting point for the study of ICT-based services. Prior to his academic career he worked as an interaction designer and freelance journalist, e.g. for Danish Broadcasting Corporation. See full CV here: <https://dk.linkedin.com/in/jannicks>. List of publications: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jannick_Sorensen ORCID: 0000-0002-4127-6551.