

Track #05

Digital Transformation for Social and Economic Development and Inclusion in Developing and Underexplored Contexts

Track Description

A continuing stream of IT innovations is disrupting our world at both micro and macro levels. AI-based machines continue to push industries to have proactive decisions at both organizational and individual levels. The “ChatGPT paradigm” is pushing both IT providers and business owners to rethink the way digital technologies can be used to initiate innovative use, and to develop creative business models.

In 2018, UNESCO predicted “Major technology breakthroughs in the next ten years to impact forms of work and the structure of labour markets as well as other aspects of life such as education, health, and agriculture”.

In the same report, UNESCO (2018) reported that “There are major inequalities in digital skills in both developing and developed countries along a number of lines, notably socio-economic status, race, gender, geography, age, and educational background”.

Indeed, even though IT innovations on open source technologies succeed to reduce inequalities in terms of information and computing resources access, there is still a requirement for a macro management and technical infrastructure that supports the development and that will help promote equal capabilities, thus increasing inclusion in developing countries.

Examples from different sectors include for example higher education as distance teaching is rethought in both developing and developed contexts since the COVID outbreak. Educational Technologies such as Moodle (Sghari and Bouaziz, 2022; Taamneh et al., 2022), serious games (Bontchev, et al., 2021; Schönbohm and Zhang, 2022; Sghari and Bouaziz, 2023), and free access to courses on education platforms such as Coursera and Udemy from International and renowned universities are pushing universities to review their business models.

Another example would be how the new fintech solutions, such as mobile payment, microfinance, peer-to-peer platforms, Blockchain, and crowdfunding extend the accessibility to financial services and allow to overcome the barriers to traditional banks’ services, essentially in developing countries. These technologies are pushing traditional banks to review their business models as well, as they are trying to integrate these solutions which are transforming the financial ecosystem (Liu et al., 2020; Sghari and Mezghani, 2021; Bouaziz and Sghari, 2021; Ediagbonya and Tioluwani, 2023).

All new technologies will create opportunities to develop new products, processes, and techniques, but would also come with new challenges to employers and employees who need to adapt the work organization, the distribution of work, and their skills (Hanelt et al., 2021; Schwertner, 2021). Thus, digital transformation generates transitions in the employee's professional, company, and managerial practices trajectories. It profoundly reshapes the structure of professions and modify the content of existing jobs in both developing and developed contexts.

The track aims at discussing theoretical foundations that can support the digital transformation for social and economic development and inclusion, especially in developing and underexplored contexts. Indeed, topics in line with digital technologies governance and implementation in developing and developed countries are of great interest to researchers, policymakers, IT providers, and businesses.

A focus on transitional economies would be a source of substantial contributions. Dealing with the “digital” can be, at the time, a source of opportunities and risks for such economies facing big concerns and challenges

linked to unexpected events and additional global pressures (Mezghani and Aloulou, 2019).

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September 6–9th, 2023

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Track Main Topics

The main topics covered in this track include, but are not limited to:

- Digital transformation and economic inclusion
- Digital transformation and social inclusion
- Digital transformation and transitions in the employee's professional, company, and managerial practices trajectories
- Digital transformation of Business models
- Digital transformation and project management
- Digital transformation and inclusion in different fields: Education, Agriculture, Fintech, etc.
- Artificial intelligence and Business transformation

Both theoretical and empirical contributions will be appreciated.

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