
Introduction

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Biographical notes: Per-Olof Brehmer is an Assistant Professor in Logistics Management and Head of the School of Management. His research topics are value creation strategies, industrial services, ICT effect on competitiveness, strategies for innovations and product development in aerospace and automotive industry and lean production. He has been a research leader for research project in collaboration with industry concerning value creation strategies, industrial services and industry competitiveness.

Helena Lindskog is an Msc in Engineering, Bachelor of Arts and a strategist, analyst, futurist, debater, columnist, strategy and management consultant, procurer, technical director for STATTEL, secretary in government committees, adviser to public administration, business developer at Ericsson with the user perspective always in focus and expert, researcher as well as a doctoral student in Industrial Management and Economics at Linköping University, Sweden. Her research focuses on public procurement, telecommunications, market segmentation and public sector development.

The world economy is becoming increasingly integrated and competition rises. Information technology and telecommunications services are at the heart of this development. The issues discussed by the authors are of great importance. As Guest Editors, we, after initial survey, selected 29 papers for the reviewing process. Ten papers were selected after revisions to be part of this Special Issue. We thank all reviewers for their constructive contributions and all the authors for their excellent work. Topics and ideas presented in these papers are relevant and timely. As this is a rapidly developing area, we hope that this issue can inspire future work in order to gain better understanding of the implications and dependencies of information technology and telecommunications services, continuous development for knowledge, technology and organisational changes.

In the last few decades, the IT and telecom industry structure and products have undergone radical changes with important implications for all organisations in the public and private sectors. Typically, the telecom industry was a state-owned monopoly. Today, there are several companies in a competitive market. The change started in the USA and Europe and it continues throughout the world. The paper by John Rice and Nigel Martin addresses an important aspect behind why the GSM technological system

became a standardised technology, which not was the case for earlier systems. An open and sharing nature of the relationship between competitors was the base for knowledge development and created a dominant global technology. Helena Lindskog addresses in her paper how procurement of telecom services instead of equipment for the public sector increases the usefulness of electronic tools in the procurement process. By structuring the procurement process, the focus shifts from technological demands to organisational demands. Information technology is discussed by Hanna Dudek and Monika Krawiec as a dynamic factor for growth in society and the digital divide in Europe.

In parallel, a formidable technical development has taken place including digitalisation, mobility, wireless connections, broadband, internet and convergence of any kind of media as well as an explosion of new services, applications and usages. These examples of IT and telecom systems not only replace previous generations, but also introduce new platforms parallel to the existing ones. Thus, the same needs can be satisfied by different solutions and by different suppliers. For acceptance of new services, the paper by Oliver Bohl et al. discusses the importance of integrating different technologies (internet, mobile devices, etc.). It is also important in order to gain market acceptance of new services. They propose a framework that can be used by service providers in analysing new services. The paper by Maiju Markova et al. focuses on the importance of identifying, measuring and then evaluating the effects of new mobile business services. Mobile payment is a cornerstone for mobile services to grow on the market, and in the paper by Steinar Kristoffersen et al. the dominant view on mobile payment is challenged. Based on a survey, they investigate the correlations between buying, trying and paying within the same medium as a determinant for mobile services adoption.

The innovations are not only in new technology. They are to a large extent in new services that is provided through these new systems. New business opportunities arise when service engineers can be connected to databases in real time. There are many examples like in agriculture where historical and new forecast data can be used in real time decisions by the farmer in the field, healthcare at home or consultation with X-ray specialists and connection to hospitals for diagnosis in case of accidents and the public sector authorities' contacts with citizens are 24/7 through their portals. The paper by Christian Kowalkowski takes a grip on service productivity gains in industrial services in general and specifically when applying IT and mobile platforms. He proposes a productivity model for IT-based services and focuses on the importance of central coordination in order to gain productivity in industrial services. The creation of a knowledge management platform is analysed in the paper by Pierre-Jean Barlatier. He concludes that searching for new members, altering the purpose of the platform and focusing on clustering knowledge is a constant ongoing process and of equal importance inside a company as in a network of companies. The paper by Stephen Burgess examines the situation for small business with the increased importance of their website, its content and provides guidelines for its planning.

Many times, knowledge about customers, users, supporting companies and the relations with them becomes more important to manage than the technical development. How the Balanced Scorecard can be developed from an internal tool to one for managing supplier relations is discussed by Staffan Brege et al. By analysing successful and problematic relations, they put focus on the importance of balancing short-term and long-term issues in order to develop knowledge, technology and the organisations.

With this selection of papers which represents interdisciplinary, conceptual and methodological variety, empirical evidence and practical implications we have highlighted how our understanding of the interaction between technology, knowledge and organisations can increase. We hope this inspires further research into this area.