

Call for Papers

Information Systems Research Special Issue: Flexible and Distributed Information Systems Development

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Overview

In recent years, considerable research attention has been devoted to process flexibility and globally distributed IS development. The quest for flexibility is evident in the development of various agile methods, such as DSDM, XP, and SCRUM. Agile development methods are examples of apparently major success stories that seem to have run counter to the prevailing wisdom in IS and software engineering. However, rather than being anti-method, agile approaches operate on the principle of “just enough method.” The quest for flexibility is also apparent in the currently increasing interest in striking a balance between the rigor of traditional approaches and the need for adaptation of those to suit particular development situations. Although suitable methods may exist, developers struggle in practice when selecting methods and tailoring these to suit their needs. Distributed development recognizes the fact that more and more IS development takes place in globally distributed settings. This is perhaps most evident in the many cases of offshoring and outsourcing of software develop-

ment to low-cost countries. Distributed development places new demands on the development process through the increased complexity related to communication, coordination, cooperation, control, and culture, as well as to technology and tools. Interestingly, many of the difficulties faced in globally distributed IS development are the same issues surfaced by agile methods and development flexibility in general.

Yet, research on the interplay between flexibility/agility and distributed development remains in its infancy. There is a need for comprehensive research studies on, for example, flexible and agile approaches to distributed development and distribution as a means of tackling some of the problems associated with plan-based development. Another related issue is how to manage a distributed development project where some sites have a strong background in agile methods and others in traditional plan-based development. In general, globally distributed IS development places new and challenging demands on process formulation, tailoring, and use. The primary goal of the proposed special issue of *Information Systems*

Research is to foster research on this interplay between flexibility/agility and distributed IS development.

Research Questions

We invite scholars from a broad range of disciplines to submit to this special issue. Papers may encompass any or all of the following: theoretical analyses, modeling, simulation, and empirical studies. Authors may examine the interplay between flexibility/agility and distributed IS development in any of a variety of possible contexts. Special topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The technology, process, and people dimensions in flexible distributed IS development;
- Agile business strategies in distributed IS development;
- Evaluation of agile methods and distributed processes in practice;
- Method and process selection and tailoring for global IS development;
- Integration of plan-based and flexible/agile processes in a distributed context;
- Managing distributed and agile processes;
- IS development flexibility;
- Distributed IS development and organizational resilience;
- Transfer of lessons from the open source software development model;
- Transfer of lessons between distributed and agile process practice;
- Metamodels for flexible and distributed development;
- Communication, coordination, and cooperation in distributed IS development;
- Method rationale, culture, and the individual developer;
- Software development teams as flexible virtual organizations;
- Analysis of fundamental concepts, such as flexibility, agility, and distribution;
- Method engineering for distributed IS development.

Deadlines and Submission Instructions

Submissions to the special issue are due no later than **June 1, 2007**. All submissions must adhere to the formatting guidelines for *Information Systems Research*

(see <http://isr.pubs.informs.org/guidelines1.htm> for details). Authors should note that, in submitting a manuscript to be reviewed for this special issue, they also incur an obligation to serve as potential reviewers for other manuscripts. Submissions should be made electronically at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/isr>.

The review process will proceed as follows:

- The editors will perform an initial screening of all manuscripts submitted. Papers that do not fit the theme of the special issue or are deemed to be at too preliminary a stage will be returned to authors without further consideration.
- Papers that pass the initial screening will be subject to a formal review process. A maximum of three review cycles will be used; papers not accepted by the third review will be rejected. The third review cycle will be initiated only if the editors believe that the requested revisions can be accomplished in a relatively straightforward manner.
- At the end of the first review cycle, authors whose papers are moving forward will be invited to participate in a research symposium to be held in March 2008. This symposium will provide a forum for presentation and developmental discussion of papers.
- Authors must adhere to a strict schedule for submission and revisions. The first round of reviews will be provided within three months of submission—revised manuscripts must be returned within three months of receipt of the reviews. The second and third review cycles will follow a two-month schedule for review and resubmission.
- In special circumstances, rejected papers may be submitted as regular submissions to *ISR*. The editors will state this in their rejection letter.

Authors wishing to determine the suitability of their work for the special issue may submit a preproposal of no more than two pages to any member of the guest editor team by April 30, 2007.

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For any additional queries regarding this special issue, please feel free to contact any member of the guest editor team listed below.

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