



***Call for Papers***

***Conference theme: After Latour: Globalisation, Inequity and Climate Change***

**Joint Conference of IFIP Working Groups**

8.2 Information Systems and Organization

9.4 Implications of Information and Digital Technologies for Development

**December 7-8, 2023**

**Hyderabad, India**

**[www.ifip2023.org](http://www.ifip2023.org)**

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## After Latour: Globalisation, Inequity and Climate Change

The work of Bruno Latour, who died in 2022, was influential in IS research primarily through his contributions to Actor Network Theory (ANT). Emerging originally in the field of Science and Technology Studies, ANT's relevance for IS scholars was quickly recognised, with Latour being invited to present a keynote talk at the 1995 IFIPWG8.2 working conference. Offering a direct challenge to the often taken for granted division between humans and non-humans (both natural and technological), ANT has informed theoretical and methodological debates in the field, not least in relation to sociomateriality.

In his later work, such as *Facing Gaia* (2017) *Down to Earth* (2018) *After Lockdown* (2021) and *On the Emergence of an Ecological Class* (2022), however, Latour extended his critique of mainstream conceptions of modernity, first set out in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991) and subsequently elaborated in *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence* (2013), to develop a broader analysis of contemporary society. In this he highlights themes, that, despite their urgency, have arguably received less attention in IS research. Specifically, he argued that the limits of globalisation, the growth of inequality and the threat of irreversible climate change are all aspects of a single phenomenon – the abandonment of a belief in a common world shared by all.

One prevalent response to these developments, Latour argued, has been to ignore them. We may double down on technological solutions, such as geo-engineering, trans-humanism or AI, trusting that they will save the day. Latour calls this “neo-hyper-modernism”. Another response is to deny them and carry on as if there are no material limits to our actions - a position that Latour names as “Out-of-this-World” for its refusal to consider that “nature” may act upon us in ways that are increasingly beyond our control. In opposition to this stance, he identifies a position that he terms “Terrestrial”, that recognises that we operate within planetary constraints. He talks of this as expressing both an attachment to the soil, that is to the material conditions of our existence, and an attachment to a world that we share in common.

While the scale of the challenge posed by unconstrained globalisation and inequity in a finite world may tend to prompt pessimism about the future, we should not allow this to obscure the evidence of initiatives that offer more hopeful ways forward. Understanding how IS may be implicated in forces that promote the loss of a shared destiny, we can also recognise how IS may contribute to its reconstruction. In this we may identify commonalities between Latour's work and that of other scholars, such as Appadurai, who view future making as grounded in day-to-day cultural practices and local experiences. Inviting us to consider how IS may support the radical innovation necessary to address contemporary and future challenges of climate change, global health and inequity.

What might such a position mean for IS? And what does it have to say about the discourses that have historically animated our field? The Joint Working Conference of IFIPWG8.2 and IFIPWG9.4 to be held in Hyderabad, India in December 2023 seeks to explore these questions.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Applications of Latourian concepts and approaches in IS research
- Reflections on the history of the IS field and its attunement with, or resistance to, globalism, inequity and climate change
- Reports and theorisation of IS projects contributing to justice and sustainability
- Alternative perspectives on digital technology and its relationship to knowledge, history, societies, and the environment.
- Giving voice to marginalised perspectives in IS research
- Identity, solidarity and collective action in digital age
- Research on multiple modes of existence and plurality of truth conditions
- Can digital transformation be more diverse and inclusive?
- Critical perspectives on Green IS
- Methodological and ethical implications of a “Terrestrial” position for IS research
- What future for technological utopianism?
- Analysis of Bruno Latour’s contribution(s) to the IS field

Papers not directly aligned with the conference theme but relevant to the topic areas of IFIP WG8.2 and IFIP WG9.4 are also welcome.

**Important dates:**

April 7, 2023	Submission open
May 20, 2023	Deadline for submitting full-papers
June 30, 2023	Deadline for submitting research-in-progress papers
August 15, 2023	Acceptance notification for full-papers
August 30, 2023	Acceptance notification for research-in-progress papers
September 15, 2023	Deadline for final full-papers
December 7-8, 2023	Conference in Hyderabad, India

**Program Chairs**

Dr. Yingqin Zheng

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**Conference Chairs**

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