

## **Research and Service Philosophies**

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### **Research**

Having been in the information field for more than fifteen years, I have witnessed the development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and its great impact on people and organizations. I consider myself privileged because I have seen first hand the transformation of our society around ICT as well as the changes of strategies and ways of work in organizations. When I started my Computer Science studies in 1986, I was mostly concerned with creating logically effective programming code, getting familiar with newly available technologies and, trying to build a nice user interface. With time and experience, I came to understand the importance of the user perspective as well as the reliance on information technology (IT) within organizations. In fact, all organizations today rely on some kind of information technology, but there is still a great deal to be done in order to accomplish expected effectiveness and productivity with IT.

During my eight years at the National Argentinean Bank I worked with information systems from data processing role and moving eventually to a position as chief of the information systems department. As such, I have worked with decision support systems and integrating distributed information systems into the management of the company. The financial system we had was outsourced so my job included the intermediation between the other managers, users and the software providers. Because I understood the importance of having in depth knowledge of the industry and the company's business strategy, I decided to enroll first in a master's program in banking and

finance in order to acquire knowledge on financial issues and later in a master's program in information management.

In addition to my work, I was teaching at the Bolivian Catholic University for more than six years. I taught classes first in the computer science department and later in the business department. It was interesting to observe that, like my corporate career, my teaching career reflected the transition in my interests, from using and developing information systems to aligning and managing them. LASPAU, the Fulbright Faculty Development Program and the Bolivian Catholic University sponsored me to join the master's program in information management at IST. This was a wonderful opportunity to become part of a high quality program specifically in "Information Management" which allowed me to study the topics directly related to my interest such as Electronic Commerce, Knowledge Management, Internet Digital Security, Data Mining for Managers and Strategic Management of Information Resources. During the second year of the program I became part of the Syracuse Information and Evaluation Project (SISE). This was my first formal step into research activities and served as the motivation to further pursue the PhD. Today, I see my enrollment in the doctoral program as a critical avenue in my life to continue developing my skills that formally contribute to academic and organizational studies about the strategic use of information systems.

I joined the doctoral program to enhance my qualifications and to help me achieve the following goals:

a) Be able to train students at a graduate level with specialization in the field of information systems (IS) and therefore contribute to academic excellence in education.

- b) Be able to practice systematic research on the factors and conditions that influence the success or failure of the use of information technologies in organizations.
- c) Be able to make contributions that will allow efficient and effective use of information technologies in organizations.

The doctoral program at the School of Information Studies has provided me with valuable research experiences as well as knowledge about research methods that has improved my ability to conduct systematic and scientific research. I have conducted research in the field of information systems as well as other specific fields such as human computer interaction, telecommunications policy, user behavior and e-business, taking advantage of the multidisciplinary environment of the school. I firmly position myself within the field of management information systems with current concentration on the role, career, education and occupational subculture of information technology professionals. The coursework I completed and my job in a very interdisciplinary school like the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University, has prepared me to adapt to the diversity of the field and to feel comfortable combining studies related to the use of ICT with other fields such as organizational behavior, organizational theories, cognitive psychology and sociology. My publications and my research work clearly combine the social aspects of the use of ICT.

Grounded in my previous work experience in banking as a systems' administrator, my interest in IT professionals is inspired also by my work as a computer consultant at Computing and Media Services at Syracuse University. I continue to be motivated by my

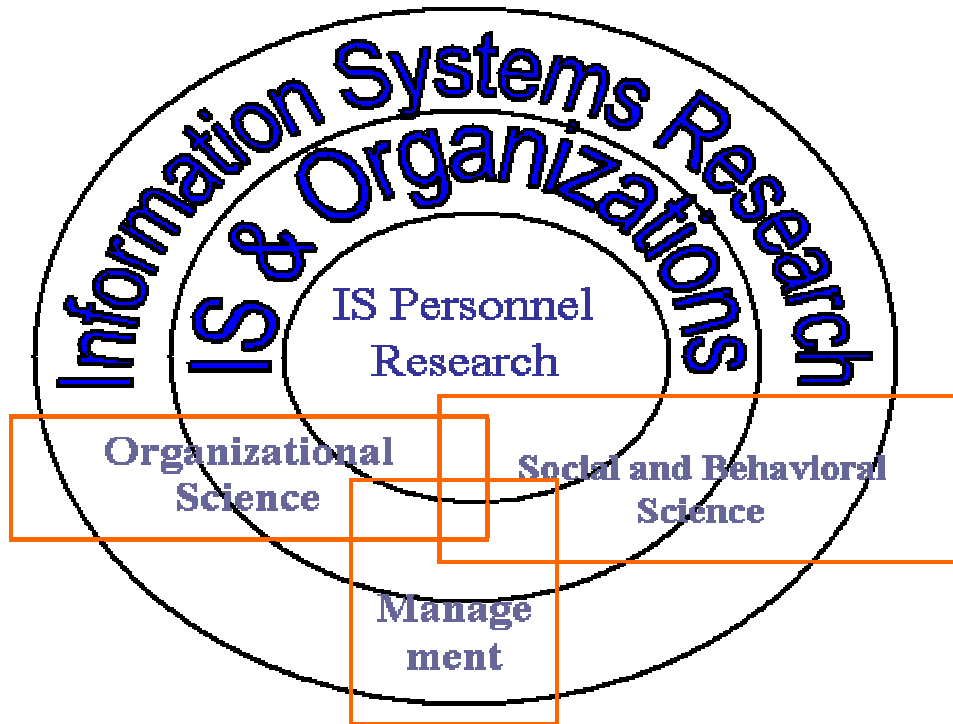
desire to contribute to the effective planning, design, implementation, use and support of information systems in organizations where IT workers play an important role.

Although I still need to learn a great deal more about the Information Management field, research, and writing of scholarly articles, I believe that I have acquired the aptitude to continue learning and most importantly to truly enjoy working in research in the field.

Figure 1 presents a map of my research interests. The fields of my interests are in circles. The broad field that comprises all the other fields is the field of Information Systems Research which as I mentioned earlier I define as the "systematic investigation of the development, operation, use and impact of information systems" (not necessarily within organizations). The next circle within IS research is "IS & Organizations" focuses specifically at the development, operation, use and impact of information systems within organizations. Within IS and organizations, the core circle, is the area related to IS Personnel Research. This area includes topics that remain an area of concern for managers and researchers such as development of IS professionals, career Preparation, Retention Strategies, Diversity in the IT workplace, Development Support, Hiring Strategies, Evaluation and control of the IS function, and management of IS Personnel, Vendors and Partners.

The rectangles represent some of the relevant disciplines that intersect and interact with the IS research such as organizational science that includes organizational theories and strategic alignment, Management includes managerial strategies in organizations, Social & Behavioral Science includes the study of human behavior in

organizations. Those boxes overlap with one another because Organizational studies, management, and behavioral and social sciences are all intertwined. I position myself as a researcher within the circles and the center circle is the area where I am currently writing my dissertation on.



**Figure 1. Map of Indira's research interests**

My general research philosophy is that I want to contribute to the effective and efficient use of IT in organizations and ultimately to the society. Accordingly, I actively participated developing NSF proposals presented by Dr. Diana Gant and Dr. Jeff Stanton. In June 2004 Dr. Stanton was awarded with a three years grant in order to explore possible adverse influences of the information technology occupational subculture on students in higher education and possible ways to counteract them. This project includes a longitudinal analysis of the occupational culture expectations, sources of information,

and perceptions of IT students over time. Because the topic of this award has been part of my research interests, I was instrumental in preparing the proposal, my dissertation is funded by this grant and I am now the project lead of this research study. I truly enjoy working in research and I see this as a way of making scientific contributions to the society.

## Service

My service activities are summarized in Tale 1. In my case, these divide into three categories: Reviewer (journal and conference), Guest speaker, and service roles at the School. My role as a reviewer has helped me understanding directly the process of blind review as well as the selection criteria used by different journals. In addition, it has exposed me to current trends in my field.

With respect to speaker roles, I spoke on how Y2K impacted financial organizations in Bolivia at the Y2K conference sponsored by the BCU in La Paz. My service activities to the School include the active participation in committees s a way of collaborating with the general principles of the school and networking with my colleagues. My general service philosophy is that I should be participating in at least one service activity every semester and take it seriously in terms of time and commitment.

**Table 1: Guest Speaker Roles, Professional Service Roles, Other Roles**

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|---|
| Program Committee Member and reviewer for the 2005 ACM-MIS-CPR conference 2005  |
| Reviewer for International Conference IRMA 2005   |
| Reviewer for AMCIS 2003 & 2004  |
| Reviewer for the Journal of Electronic Commerce Research  |
| Spanish Editor of CNY Latino (2004-Present)   |
| Faculty Meeting Liaison of IST PhD Students (2003-2004)   |
| Member of the Financial Committee representing ISTGO in the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University. Fall/2000-2002. |