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Introduction

In Search of a New Alignment in Service Research: A Unique Dual-Journal Special Section

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Nearly two years ago, *INFORMS Service Science* and *IEEE Transactions on Services Computing* teamed up on a unique special issue call for papers on the search for a new disciplinary alignment in service research, particularly from the perspectives of information technology and computing services. More precisely, the goal was for business and engineering scholars to join forces to advance service research by reconciling their varied approaches to understanding and designing service.

Although in many areas, advances in service have benefited from multiple perspectives, our view was that transdisciplinary service research could both improve services computing and enable design and delivery of the highest quality business service systems. Cultivating transdisciplinary research means reaching out to scholars from multiple backgrounds. It means sharing and reconciling vocabulary, research methods and more. It was our view that what was missing was a research agenda that combined business service systems and systems-of-systems ideas with service computing's formal methods, standards, best practices, and repeatable processes. Research in these areas is essential but researchers had to leave their comfort zones to work together across disciplinary lines. Some science and engineering scholars may view business services research as a soft discipline, but there is significant respect for formal business process and workflow methods that can deliver model-driven development. Business researchers may view the engineering and computer science perspectives as remiss in addressing essential and dynamic elements of value co-creation, B2B contracting, and pricing, but there is significant respect for services computing's role in distributing, cost-effective scaling, and personalization of computing service capability. Both areas are in transition, and we believe that both could benefit by working together.

For the special issue, we put together a board of associate editors drawn from both the *INFORMS* and *IEEE* services communities (listed below), and we received a total of 30 original manuscripts between the two journals. Manuscripts underwent a rigorous double-blind review, and in most cases, went through several rounds of revision. It is our honor now to present the special section of *INFORMS Service Science* resulting from this call for papers. There are three articles that represent distinctly different interdisciplinary approaches to problems of service. "Software Evolution in Web-Service Ecosystems: A Game-Theoretic Model" by Fokaefs and Stroulia of the University of Alberta in Canada takes a service ecosystem view in developing a method for decision making for IT service providers that considers both competition and client expectations to maximize profitability. "Loyalty and Profitability of VIP and Non-VIP Customers in the Banking Service Industry" by Chen, Cheng, and Hsiao of National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan and the University of Florida revisits the seminal idea of the service-profit chain and applies it to banking with implications for customer loyalty programs. And "A Systemic and Relational Approach to Pricing Services" by Rai, Puvvala, and Jah of Tata Research in India describes an approach to generating service pricing models tailored to customer business objectives using examples from IT and cloud-based services.

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