

## Call for Papers

### Track 03. Unravelling Social Mechanisms of ICT-enabled Development: What is Development and How Can ICT Enable It?

#### Track chairs/associate editors

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#### Overview of the research area

Although ICT4D researchers have studied many aspects of development (e.g., healthcare, poverty reduction, job opportunities, and education) and a range of ICT innovations (e.g., tele-centers, mobile money exchange services, geographic information systems) over the past few decades, explaining the link between ICT and development is still a struggle. This is because of at least two reasons. First, there is no clear consensus on the meaning of development. Second, there is a lack of explanatory theory that carefully traces the link between ICT and development.

This track aims to provide a platform for researchers to strengthen this boundary-making and deepening exercise, and is in line with recent calls to consolidate and clarify the theoretical contribution of the field (Andersson et al., 2012; Heeks, 2010; Karanasios, 2014). An exploration of current literature offers indications that the ICT4D field is moving in that direction (Foster and Heeks, 2013; Hayes et al., 2013), and we hope to spur that effort on through this track.

To address the first challenge, we invite researchers to broaden their definition of development to go beyond economic measures of development, such as GDP. For example, two alternative perspectives on development that researchers could make use of are: a) Sen's (1999) capability approach that emphasizes the agency of humans in their development, and b) the concept of subjective well-being, which values life satisfaction and emotional well-being.

The second challenge calls for research that draws on the socially-embedded and time-dependent nature of ICT innovations to trace the social mechanisms that link ICT to development. In the context of ICT4D, social mechanisms are composed of entities (both individual and collective entities), actions, and events that produce development outcomes. Social mechanisms operate across multiple levels, incorporate multiple causal explanations, and embody the context in which they occur (Avgerou, 2013; Hayes and Westrup, 2012).

Topics of interest for the track include, but are not limited to:

1. ICT and well-being
2. ICT and inclusive practices in organisations and society
3. Methodological approaches to trace social mechanisms
4. The interaction between individual, group, social/community and national practices in influencing development
5. Creative ICT innovations that recognizes indigenous knowledge
6. ICT and emancipation
7. ICT and negative consequences on development
8. Governance approaches for ICT in a development context
9. Trade-offs between economic and other measures of development, especially longitudinally

#### Important dates

Paper submission: November 15, 2016  
Acceptance notification: January 31, 2017  
Resubmission: February 28, 2017  
Conference: May 22-24, 2017



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