

## Call for Papers

### Track 06. The Contribution of Practice Theories to ICT for Development

#### Track chairs

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#### Overview of the research area

Despite the growing body of research on ICT and development (ICTD) it has been argued that the theoretical contribution of research in the ICTD field is weak (Avgerou, 2010; Karanasios, 2014). It has also been argued that there is a difficulty in identifying relevant theoretically grounded approaches to frame ICTD research, which are of maximum benefit to theory and practice (Walsham & Sahay, 1999).

This track focuses on the use and development of practice theories in ICTD. Practice theories, such as actor-network theory (ANT), structuration theory and activity theory can be described as focusing on understanding change and development of human practice (Miettinen et al., 2012) and deepening understandings about the recursive interactions between social structures, human agents and technologies (Orlikowski, 1992). The stream of academic work related to practice theories is diverse. However, they are constituted by some unifying criteria: (i) the process and performative view on social life; (ii) the critical role of materiality; (iii) the different role of agency and actors; (iv) seeing knowledge in a capability to act; and (v) putting interest and motivation as central in the theorizing (Nicolini, 2013).

Within ICTD, the use of practice theories remains under-developed. ANT (e.g. Andrade & Urquhart, 2010), structuration theory (e.g. Walsham & Han, 1993) and activity theory (e.g. Karanasios & Allen, 2013) are perhaps the most dominant theoretical approaches (Steyn, 2015). From these theories there have been other derivative theories that can be applied to various developmental contexts.

Fields adjacent to ICTD have a greater tradition of use with practice theories. For instance, HCI and IS (Kuutti & Bannon, 2014), Computer Supported Mediated Work (CSMW) (Schmidt, 2014) and organization studies (Nicolini, 2013) have all explored a wide spectrum practice theories, and indeed acted as fertile fields for their development, and there is opportunity to learn from developments in these fields. Alongside the proliferation of contributions, also comes the diversity of a multitude of types of practice theories, and several fruitful debates, which are important for ICTD; for instance on agency.

This track aims to develop understanding on how practice theories may generate insights in development contexts. In addition to being a forum on high quality research the track aims to act as a platform to (i) engage ICTD scholars with the basic conceptual premises of practices theories, focusing on their use, development and contribution; (ii) provide a forum to extend the development of practice theories; and, (iii) provide a networking opportunity for scholars already utilizing practice theories.

#### Exemplar topics and types of contributions looked for

The objective of this track is to highlight the contribution of practice theories to ICTD research by drawing on outstanding research. We seek relevant and rigorous submissions which address several of the following criteria:

- Apply and develop practice theories by demonstrating the empirical and theoretical contributions they offer
- Offer new contributions to practice theories, for instance extending the approaches or signalling how the field of ICTD can offer a fertile landscape for their application
- Offer in depth comparison between practices theories and their contribution to ICTD
- Critical studies on practice theory, and papers that illuminate on the difficulties of applying them
- Contribute to understand of use of technologies in developing countries using practice theories



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- Explore how practice theories may guide interventions in expansive learning processes and understand the practice of policy-making and enactment of these processes

Ideally, submissions will provide new understandings of ICTD and practice theory. Submissions will be evaluated using rigorous criteria associated with high quality academic research.

### Associate editors

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### Important dates

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

### Conference co-chairs

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Information on other tracks: **2017.ifipwg94.net**

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