Foreword

From its early days in the 1970s to present day, information systems (IS) research has undergone a huge metamorphosis from descriptive explorations to theory building efforts. Along the way, vast improvements have been made in methodological rigor and instrumentation design. Many researchers have contributed to the field by defining and providing guidelines for conducting positivistic and interpretive research, as well as explicating various methodologies in the IS context (e.g., surveys, case studies, experimentation, grounded theory, historical analysis, and design science).

A common denominator in the past thirty five years has been the need to base our research on theoretical foundations and build theory so that it allows cumulative work and has sustainable value. While many strides have been made, we are still in infancy in our understanding of theory and its proper use in IS research. From personal experience, not too long ago, while teaching a doctoral seminar, I was confronted with something as simple explaining the different types of research models to my students. It turned out to be a challenge and we had to develop a taxonomy of research models ourselves (Palvia, et al., 2006). It is therefore heartening to note that the editors of this book have taken a very positive step in providing the IS research community the latest and state-of-the-art knowledge about theoretical foundations in IS research.

I have examined the collection of chapters in this volume. I am impressed both by the breadth and the depth of the material included in the book. The book is comprehensive. The contributions have been made by experts in various domains. In the early chapters, the authors describe the process of theory building and extension. Later, they investigate specific theories and their applicability in the IS context. The IS field is interdisciplinary. In my view, therefore, it must be open and willing to embrace existing knowledge and theories from other disciplines. The editors have carefully included theories from various disciplines, such as management, marketing, sociology, culture, and psychology. They have cast a wide net to the benefit of our readers and the IS research community.

I am sure this book will be an excellent source of knowledge for IS researchers and will have a long shelf life as a useful reference.

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REFERENCES

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