

# Preface

This book is designed to introduce doctoral and other higher-degree research students to the process of scientific research in the fields of Information Systems as well as in Information Technology, Business Process Management and other related disciplines in the social sciences. Information Systems is the research field concentrating on the impact of *information technology in use* by individuals and organisations alike, and is a fundamental element in the understanding of current and future business, management, societal and individual practices.

This book is based on the author's experience in information systems research, research-level teaching and postgraduate student supervision at Queensland University of Technology, the leading institute for information systems research in Australia. Being based on these experiences, the book is also positioned relative to the worldview and experiential accounts by the author. In consequence, while most aspects of the book relate to general experiences, challenges and processes in scientific research in general, it is mostly influenced by the domain and scientific paradigm in which the author conducts his research.

This book is not meant to replace but rather to complement existing textbooks for research students and scholars. Unlike other textbooks, this book is not primarily about research methods but instead covers the entire research process from start to finish. It places particular emphasis on understanding cognitive and behavioural aspects such as motivational components, various modes of inquiry in scholarly conduct, theorising, planning of research, as well as publication plans, and the ethical challenges of becoming a researcher.

The book is meant to guide research students in their process of learning the life of a researcher. In doing so, it provides an understanding of the essential elements, concepts and challenges of the journey of research studies. It provides a gateway for the student to inquire deeper about each element covered (such as a particular research method) by directing them to the appropriate resources.

The book is designed to be comprehensive and broad but also succinct and compact. It focuses on the key principles and challenges (namely, the core of the research process) without delving into the many associated challenges, exceptions and further issues. In essence, the book is meant to guide beginning doctoral

students in their quest to do scholarly work and provides an easy and comprehensive introduction that can assist them in developing their own answers and strategies over the course of their studies.

## Structure

This book is organised into seven chapters, which span three parts:

Part 1: *Basic Principles of Research* introduces to the reader the journey and challenges of pursuing a research degree in information systems. Motivational components are discussed as well as key underlying principles drawn from the paradigms of the scientific method. It introduces the vocabulary of research and lays the foundation for reflecting upon research in Information Systems, be it the students' own research or the ones they encounter.

Part 2: *Conducting Research* dissects the research process in information systems as a science into the phases of planning, designing and executing. Each of these phases then receives due attention in terms of planning the research design, developing and appropriating theory in research and executing relevant research methods. In doing so, this part of the book aspires to give a general process model applicable to all doctoral students in information systems, and contains guidelines that can help in tackling challenges along the way.

Part 3: *Publishing Research* reflects upon the outcomes of the research process and provides practical suggestions for managing these outcomes. Publication strategies and writing tactics are the focus of this part alongside ethical considerations pertaining to research in terms of conduct and publication. It also offers a closing reflection on the key processes and outcomes of scholarly work.

## Acknowledgements

There have been many people that influenced my work and more generally my life in significant ways. Certainly too many to mention here, and if I did I would only – in an undeliberate way – omit some of them, so I won't even start.

I do want to mention a number of people. My gratitude is owed to my colleagues in my department, especially our Head of School, Professor Michael Rosemann, for being a mentor and advisor, a critic and a friend – and for keeping my back free while I invested my time into this book.

My own thinking is much inspired by the academic scholars that I work with and who I hold in highest esteem for their success, professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm. I am a much better researcher than I could have ever hoped to be because I was allowed to work with people such as Peter Green, Marta Indulska, Jan Mendling, Hajo Reijers, Jan vom Brocke, Stefan Seidel, Michael zur Muehlen, Guy

Gable and many other esteemed scholars that I have met and worked with over the years. I owe a great deal of advice and experiences that I offer in this book from the knowledge that they, and others within and outside academia, were willing to share with me.

This book is also improved because of professional editing support that I received through manuscript editing services provided by Academic Research, Writing, and Editing Services Ltd., Pittsburgh, USA.

I also believe that acknowledgement is due to those that are in my life without crossing the boundaries of work – friends who share their life experiences with me and who are happy to indulge in mine. I know that they know that I am referring to them at this stage, so be thanked for making my life a wonderful and joyous experience.

Finally, my thoughts are with my family, my parents and sisters, my grandmother and all other members. Being an academic has meant for me physical separation but has also helped me learn the value in having these wonderful people as my family, and enjoying the precious moments we have together as much and as often as possible.

Laura, you are inspiring me all the time to be the best person that I can possibly be, and much more than that. You are my reason to go out and do the best I can – and more importantly, to come home.

June 2012

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<http://www.springer.com/978-3-642-30047-9>

Scientific Research in Information Systems

A Beginner's Guide

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2013, XII, 164 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-642-30047-9