

**Invitation to Participate in a
Symposium on Research in Systems Analysis and Design
In the Information Systems Field**

To be held in Miami, Florida
March 2 & 3, 2002

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Context

The symposium is rooted in the belief that Systems Analysis and Design (SA&D) lies at the 'core' of the Information Systems discipline. SA&D activities are fundamental to any systems development project. Accordingly, research that examines all aspects of S&D should be an integral part of IS research. Indeed, it can be argued that SA&D is one of the few research subjects that cannot easily be appropriated by other disciplines (such as computer science, economics, strategy, operations research).

Research in this area can range from the creation of new modeling formalisms (such as data models) and development methodologies, to the evaluation of new or existing formalisms and methods by examining human and social issues surrounding their use in organizations. Given the broad range of activities, research in this area can be conducted using various methodologies including (but not restricted to): formal analysis, systems development (design science), experiments, case studies, and field studies.

Motivation

Despite its centrality to the IS field and potential contribution to both theory and practice, research in this area has received relatively little attention in leading IS journals. We believe this is a problem that needs to be, and can be, fixed.

Objectives

The purpose of the symposium is to determine if there is a committed core of SA&D researchers in IS who are willing to work together toward improving the contribution made to the discipline by SA&D research.

To help us move in that direction, we plan to use the symposium to address a number of critical issues, including:

1. Do we speak a common language in discussing SA&D research?
2. Are there core theories that can drive SA&D research? Can we reach some consensus on such theories? Do we need to?
3. As a sub-community within IS, can we improve the opportunities for collaborative research that draws on the distinct research strengths that various members of the community can offer?
4. Can we develop mentoring and feedback mechanisms for researchers attempting to publish their research in top journals?
5. Can we encourage doctoral students to conduct research in this area?
6. What can we do to promote awareness of, and dissemination activities (such as conferences and journals) related to systems analysis research.

Agenda

The symposium will provide an open forum for participants to raise and discuss issues that will help us achieve the group's objectives. We expect the workshop to run over a weekend, with an agenda that follows the following general outline. We plan to have one or more session leaders provide short position statements related to each theme, and we invite you to let us know if you are willing to prepare a short presentation on any of the items below. Of course, you do not have to prepare a presentation to participate in and contribute to the discussions.

Saturday AM

- Scope of SA&D research (brief introduction of each participant)
- Fundamental terminology and concepts
- Candidate theories to guide research on SA&D

Saturday PM

- Role of research methodologies in SA&D research
- Influencing mainstream IS journals
- Influencing IS doctoral research

Sunday AM [we plan to conclude no later than 1:00pm]

- Mechanisms to promote collaboration within our group
- Mechanisms to promote early feedback that improves research while it is 'in progress'
- Practicing what we preach – presentation and constructive commentary on a few 'embryonic' research ideas