

Digital technologies within and beyond the workplace: impacts, ambiguities, and transformative trends

Call for papers

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The call for papers builds on the WOA 2020's theme, as it focuses on the challenges and opportunities that digital technologies present for Organization Studies field. The analysis of the relations between digital technologies and organizations requires a multidisciplinary, critical, and innovative approach, in order to shed a light on the transformative – or even revolutionary – trends, as well as on the negative effects or the ambiguities and paradoxical results – that characterize digitalized organizations.

Organization scholars are increasingly attentive to the role and impact of digitalization (e.g. Hinings et al., 2018), investigating how digital technologies affect individuals (e.g. Zuboff, 2015, 2019), organizations and professions (e.g. Foer, 2017), entire industries (e.g. Taplin, 2017), and societies (e.g. Morozov, 2011). There is no doubt that digitally-enabled arrangements permeate and reshape industries and fields, challenging organizational models, HRM practices, power structures and meaning systems (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011). Promoting theory and research development on this important substantive and methodological topic is therefore of foremost importance.

The special issue welcomes research contributions on the impacts, the ambiguities, and the transformative trends that emerge from the introduction of digital technologies into organizations. In the last few years some authors (i.e. Kane et al., 2015) have shown that the integration of digital technologies, such as social, mobile, analytics and cloud, is profoundly transforming organizational models, with specific reference to the way in which companies and public administration design new organizational forms, change inter-organizational ties, manage work practices and HRM processes. Issues such as internal commitment to digital progress, HRM lifecycle, talent attraction and retention, are strictly intertwined with ongoing digital transformation that modern organizations are experiencing (Orlikowski, 2007). The basic tenet of this revolution is to be found in the increased potential to connect organizational actors through digital information and communication technologies to organize work across conventional organizations. Furthermore, the reliance on 'big data' and algorithms in organizational strategies and models accentuate the need to explore the relationship between developments in digital technology and organizational changes. The emerging forms of network enterprises, extended districts, organizational platforms, holacracies, community of practices, temporary organizations, and new roles and professions and others in most case are not mere consequences but are, or should, be matter of joint design of digital technologies, organization and work. At the same time, the pervasiveness of digital technologies in organizations may improve employees' productivity and quality of the work experience, but provoke also negative consequences for individuals well-being (Tarafdar et al., 2015). The disruptive effects of most advanced technological innovations on existing jobs is debated as well as the effect of digital forms of work on the autonomy and control of workers (e.g., Balsmeier and Woerter, 2019; Ales et al., 2018). Employees have to struggle following the fast pace of innovations, and have to spend more time and effort renewing their technological skills. Moreover, they can be exposed to continuous changes in work conditions, to the risk of permanent availability, or the loss of boundaries between working and non-working activities. In this sense, the concept of technostress has received growing attention from organizational scholars (e.g. Barley et al., 2011).

Specific **topics** include but are not limited to:

- Work re-design, robotics and digital transformation;
- Innovation in the organizational processes design and ICT;
- Digitalization and re-design of the HR function and practices (social recruitment, net-learning, HR big data & analytics, etc.);
- Advanced technologies and new forms of work organization: teleworking, smart-working, agile solutions, co-working, online collaboration in enterprise social platforms, virtual communities;
- Digital transformation, new organizational forms and networking;
- Work redesign, individual autonomy and organizational control in digital workplaces;
- Outcomes of the introduction of digital technologies in the workplaces – e.g. positive, negative consequences or paradoxical and ambiguous results;
- Causes and consequences of technostress for employees.

To address these organizational issues related to digital transformation, many scholars (e.g. Verhoef et al., 2019) suggest not to rely on a single research field, e.g. information systems or mainstream organization studies, but try to adopt an integrative approach able to catch the wide implications that digitalization may have on organizations and people. Thus, the special issue is open to multi-disciplinary theoretical and empirical methodologies as well as to a range of empirical settings. Both qualitative and quantitative empirical approaches as well as conceptual and theoretically focused contributions are welcomed. In order to develop the richness and variety of organizational studies on these topics, we promote contributions which adopt critical perspectives.

Main References

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Papers will go through the standard review process of the journal.

Deadline for full paper submission (in **English**): **31 July 2020**

Participants to the WOA 2020 are invited to submit their full paper for consideration in the special issue.