

Abstracts

Session I – From brokers to systemic intermediaries

Annalisa Caloffi (University of Firenze), Ana Colovic (NEOMA), Federica Rossi (Birkbeck), Margherita Russo (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia)

Innovation intermediaries in the context of emerging digital technologies

Innovation intermediaries can play an important role in helping companies to address the challenges brought about by the digital transformation. They can help companies to adopt and integrate new technological and organisational systems and processes, foster collaborations among SMEs and between SMEs and large companies, and unveil market opportunities. We discuss the specificities of the role of public innovation intermediaries in supporting the digital transformation. We build on a base of evidence composed of extensive interviews with selected public intermediaries in France and in the UK, innovation experts and companies, carried out between 2018 and 2019, to argue that public intermediaries, which carry public policy mandates, have a specific role to play, particularly in the context of the emerging, complex and yet not fully commoditised set of technologies underpinning the ‘fourth industrial revolution’.

Anja Leckel (Aachen University)

The mediating role of value capture – a quantitative study on the determinants of social capital on open innovation platforms

In this study, we draw on social capital theory to address the challenge of open innovation (OI) platforms to establish sustained knowledge exchange between platform participants by overcoming the fear of being exploited and the inherent lack of trust in a rather anonymous setting. Social capital theory provides a comprehensive framework for examining the nature of social connections through its focus on both structural networks and interpersonal relationships. Prior research has recognized that social capital is an essential stock variable to activate and maintain knowledge exchange between participants of a network – however, this construct is not yet established in the context of OI platforms. Results of an empirical study of 61 OI platforms show that a high level of decentralized control among seekers, solvers and the intermediary is positively related to social capital and that this effect is mediated by securing value capture for the crowd. The results suggest that it is crucial to (re-)design OI platforms in terms of decentralizing control during joint value creation, i.e. sharing power among stakeholder groups, while securing value capture in order to build social capital in a digital collaboration context.

Chris Williams (Durham University)

New directions in e-value creation: the case of roq.ad and the ad-tech industry

We use the recent case of Berlin-based roq.ad in the ad-tech industry to expose weaknesses and gaps in highly-cited models of e-business value creation. Some of these models are nearly 20 years old and were based on data collected in the 1990s. In recent times, value creation in e-business has seen a sharpened focus on the role of data science, collapsed boundaries between research and marketing, and internationally dispersed talent. The case approach provides a basis for highlighting the enduring strengths of early models as well as new directions for their development in the future. Implications for research into e-value creation in the new digital age are discussed.

Session II: The role of government in supporting the digital transition

Riccardo Zecchinelli (The Cabinet Office)

Role of government in technology transformation in the public sector

The aim of the presentation is to cover at high level what UK government is doing on technological transformation and in particular on AI and automation implementation in the Public Sector, highlighting key enablers and potential next steps.

Stefania Paladini (Birmingham City Business School)

Blockchain and its use in the public administration and public utilities

There is hardly anyone who has not heard of blockchain, even though the knowledge most of the people seem to have of Nakamoto's original concept is related to cryptocurrencies and bitcoins.

And yet, nowadays the most promising applications of blockchain are beyond the financial market, spanning across different sectors and industries.

The role of governments and the institutional framework is therefore paramount at this moment to make sure the technology can fulfil its promises.

Muthu de Silva (Birkbeck), Jeremy Howells (University of Kent) and Zaheer Khan

Flexing capabilities: innovation ambidexterity and innovation intermediaries

There is an increasing interest in understanding how to achieve ambidexterity, involving the simultaneous pursuit of exploratory and exploitative innovations, through the use of external knowledge. This is especially the case for innovation intermediaries, organizations which typically operate in highly innovative and open task environments fostering collaboration between actors. Innovation intermediaries, to ensure their long-term survival and growth, rely on external knowledge to augment their own in-house innovation expertise and capabilities. By adopting a sequential mixed methods research design, the paper finds that two different roles performed by innovation intermediaries in collaborative projects, namely knowledge and network roles, have a differential impact on the generation of distinct types of in-house innovation by intermediaries. The knowledge role of innovation intermediaries is conducive to exploratory innovation, whereas their network role contributes to exploitative innovation. The analysis found in relation to innovation ambidexterity that whilst internal capabilities are crucial in transforming external knowledge to achieve innovation, relational capabilities predominantly involve acquiring and transferring external knowledge to the innovation intermediary. The impact of such capabilities however varied depending on the nature of the innovation intermediary's role and innovation profile.