Tutorial: Metaphysics of Business Technology Research

Business technology deals with a wide range of multifaceted questions pertaining to the development, use and implications of information and communication technologies in business organizations. While research in this area is concerned with technology, it is often about organizational action and social change. However, the paradigmatic position of traditional information systems research is markedly functionalist (sensu Burrell and Morgan). While this regulative stance requisitely accounted for technical and social phenomena in the contained structural scopes of the past, the complexity of today's hyperconnected and fast-paced environment calls for more change-oriented ontological positions, a wider scope, and increasingly transdisciplinary modes of inquiry.

This tutorial puts forward a metaparadigmatic framework for business technology research, suggesting "requisite" metaphysical stances for different research contexts of business technology phenomena. The proposed framework provides a meta-level perspective on the co-evolution of and relationship between business technology and organization design and helps contextualize research both in its structural scope of inquiry as well as in terms of its metaphysical underpinnings.

The tutorial is meant for all researchers and students who are interested in the metaparadigmatic "big picture" of business technology research and open to see "blind spots" in their ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Bio

Janne J. Korhonen is researcher and doctoral student at Aalto University School of Science. He received his M.Sc. (Tech) degree in Computer Science at Helsinki University of Technology in 2003 and B.A. degree in Cognitive Science at University of Helsinki in April 2007. His research interests include information systems, leadership, organizational design and developmental psychology. In his dissertation work, Korhonen has investigated the role of Chief Information Officer (CIO) in organizational change and transformation.