

Strategic Scientific Workshop funded by the Humboldt Centre, University of Bayreuth

Strategic Scientific Workshop "Digital Innovation, Empowerment, and the MNE"

Hosted in Schloss Thurnau from 24.06.2024 – 27.06.2024 (extended by +1 day)

Workshop purpose and description.

Digital technology has become increasingly integrated into firms, e.g. in products, services, procedures, and/or operations (Henfridsson et al., 2014; Nambisan et al., 2017; Svahn et al., 2017). Digital technology underlies digital product innovation by rethinking usages and purpose (Henfridsson et al., 2018), by novel solutions, or by assisting its development by digital technologies (Yoo et al., 2012; Hund et al., 2021).

Especially, the multinational enterprise (MNE) has specific advantages in terms of accessing digitalization expertise and talents that might be distributed in different institutional and geographical contexts (Lorenzen et al., 2020; Schotter et al., 2017; Stallkamp et al., 2018). However, Innovation Management and International Business researchers (IB) scholars have paid little attention to building connections with Information System (IS) researchers on how to manage innovation in the context of digital transformation. Especially MNE with its distributed units and business models can particularly gain from greater digitalization of their processes, communication, and business models by better connectivity of the distributed geographical locations and specific resource conditions (Autio et al., 2021; Lorenzen et al., 2020).

For example, greater connectivity through digitalization supports collaboration within and among firms for allowing to access and to combine context-specific local (Awate et al., 2022; Bouncken et al., 2021). It can contribute toward a "flat world" where global disaggregation of services leverages global resources and mitigates knowledge transfer (Mithas & Whitaker, 2007). Especially, the digital transfer of sticky, context-embedded, tacit knowledge of locations is limited and might require a physical presence as a driver of "spikes" in the global economy (Mithas & Whitaker, 2007) and/or it causes great effort, demanding employees inclined using and to adapt digital technologies. There are high risks of overestimating the advantages of digital media (overview in: Bouncken et al., 2022).

Therefore, there is a severe research need on digital innovation creation and implementation in MNE. The so far barely connected research avenues demand the collaboration of researchers from the different domains. Exactly this served as the purpose of the workshop: bringing scholars from the so far largely disconnected domains of digital innovation and international business together.

In the course of the workshop, we elaborated on several important subtopics from different angles. One is about digital empowerment in MNE's. Especially here, the advantages of connectivity are influenced by how motivated employees are in coping with the digital transformation and for providing inputs to further adaptations and developments of new digital processes and business models. Besides being only passively involved, employees may provide specific impetus that can trigger, adapt, or improve digital solutions. At the same time, the complicatedness, complexity, and fast development of digital technologies exert uncertainties and cause anxiety in employees (Furr et al., 2022).

In addition, previous research on the interface between IS and management has shown that employees' behavior is influenced by the top management team (TMT) in several ways. The TMT sets the firm's vision and radiates values and behaviors to their employees (Foss et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021). For example, TMT can support the legitimacy process that is needed for the changes in the organization's belief system within the digitalization and digital transformation (Al-Nuaimi et al., 2022). Manager's task-oriented leadership and people-oriented leadership behavior may reduce employee's technology overload when they use

various, novel, and often only partially understood digital technologies (Weber et al., 2022). However, we know little about how TMT can motivate employees to use and adapt digital technology for achieving and implementing digital technology. Research is pressing on is how TMT can support digital empowerment in firms and how empowerment differs between MNE and non-MNE.

The workshop stimulated research on this important aspects via keynote speeches that were followed by shorter research note presentations, and group discussions on roundtables.

Workshop objectives. We established an interdisciplinary scientific platform of innovation, IB, and IS top scholars. The workshop allowed to further advance the epistemological domain of digital innovation. We further leveraged expert knowledge and sharing of cross-disciplinary insights into digital connectivity and digital innovation. A mix of keynote speeches as well as group discussions advanced idea creation and further developed research projects.

The intense personal exchanges and the social events promoted understanding and further collaboration.

Workshop participants by university.

Participant	University	Country
Prof. Dr. Bouncken, Ricarda	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Megan Mc Daniel	Monash University Melbourne	Australia
Prof. Dr. Heyden, Pitosh	Monash University Melbourne	Australia
Prof. Dr. Noble, Charles	University of Tennessee	USA
Prof. Dr. Mudambi, Ram	Fox School of Business, Temple University	USA
Prof. Dr. Luo, Xin	University of New Mexico	USA
Prof. Dr. Schotter, Andreas	Ivey Business School, Western University	Canada
Prof. Dr. Scalera, Vittoria	University of Amsterdam	Netherlands
Prof. Dr. Pampel, Jochen	Universität Potsdam	Germany
Prof. Dr. Cesinger, Beate	Universität Liechtenstein	Lichtenstein
Prof. Dr. Abe, Tomakozu	Hokkaido University	Japan
Prof. Dr. Pesch, Robin	Newcastle Business School	UK
PD Dr. Fredrich, Viktor	Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien	Austria
Prof. Dr. Baum, Matthias	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Dr. Gantert, Till	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Dr. Franzke, Sonja	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Vogt, Christina	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Schmitt, Florian	University of Bayreuth	Germany
He, Kai	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Feist, Matthias	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Sekulic, Robert	University of Bayreuth	Germany
Drack, Nicolas	University of Bayreuth	Germany

Workshop sessions and schedule.

Arrival & Dinner Monday, 24.06.2024	Workshop Day 1 Tuesday, 25.06.2024	Workshop Day 2 Wednesday, 26.06.2024	Workshop Day 3 (extended +1) Thursday, 27.06.2024
Arrivals during the day	Morning session 09:30–12:30	Morning session 09:30–12:30	Morning session 09:30–12:30
	09:30 – 10:00	09:30 – 9:45	09:30 – 9:45
	Opening words Prof. Dr. Bouncken; Prof. Dr. Noble; Prof. Dr. Luo	Opening words of the day 09:45 – 10:45	Opening words of the day 09:45 – 10:45
19:00 –			
Welcome Dinner Thurnau & networking	10:00 – 11:00	Gantert, Till Think Global and Be Global: How Global Mindset and TMT Internationalization Affect Digital Innovation <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Pitosh Heyden</i>	Gantert, Till Digital Innovation: A matter of Plurality and Égalité in Top Management Teams? <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Beate Cesinger</i>
	Prof. Dr. Mudambi, Ram: Digitalization and the geographic concentration of innovative activity <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Ricarda Bouncken</i>	10:45 – 11:00	10:45 – 11:00
	11:00 – 11:15	Short coffee break	Short coffee break
	Short coffee break	11:00 – 12:00	11:00 – 12:00
	11:15 – 12:15	Drack, Nicolas: Internationalization Processes and Entrepreneurial Passion <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Matthias Baum</i>	Prof. Dr. Pesch, Robin No Country for Old Top Management? Top Management Age and Support for Digital Transformation <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Jochen Pampel</i>
	Vogt, Christina Shared Digital Identity and/or Formal Goal Setting of TMTs: How to Secure Growth? <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Ram Mudambi</i>	12:00 – 12:30	12:00 – 12:30
	12:15 – 12:30	Wrap-Up of the Morning	Wrap Up of the Morning
	Wrap-Up of the Morning		
	12:30 – 14:00 lunch break and networking	12:30 – 14:00 lunch break and networking	12:30 – 14:00 lunch break and networking
	Afternoon session 14:00 – 18:00	Afternoon session 14:00 – 15:30	Afternoon session 14:00 – 16:30
	14:00 – 15:00	14:00 – 15:00	14:00 – 15:00
	Prof. Dr. Schotter, Andreas The interplay of digitalization and the dispersion of inventor productivity <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Vittoria Scalera</i>	Dr. Sonja Franzke: „The Bold, the Confident, the Driven, and the Fearful – How Entrepreneurs Adapt Their Business Model in Response to a Major Crisis” <i>Discussant: Dr. habil. Fredrich, Viktor</i>	Prof. Dr. Schotter, Andreas “The use of AI in IB Teaching” <i>Discussant: Prof. Dr. Pesch, Robin</i>
	15:00 – 15:15	15:00 – 15:30	15:00 – 16:00
	Short break	Short break	Prof. Dr. Jochen Pampel “Digitalization and Sustainability”
	15:15 – 16:15	15:30 – 19:00	
	Florian Schmitt The interplay of digitalization and the dispersion of inventor productivity	Trip to Uni BT Campus	

Discussant: Prof. Dr. Ricarda Bouncken	19:00 –	Discussant: Prof. Dr. Ricarda Bouncken
16:15 – 16:30	Dinner Thurnau & networking	
Short break		16:00– 17:00
16:30– 17:30		Prof. Dr. Ricarda Bouncken: Conducting Research Workshop: From Theory to Positioning, Mechanisms, Concepts, and Items
He, Kai: Kickstarter: Sustainability Orientation of New Ventures: Equalizer or Stressor for the Optimal Distinctiveness Tension?		Concluding Remarks & Farewell
Discussant: Prof. Dr. Charles Noble		
17:30 – 18:00		
Wrap-Up of the day		
19:00 –		
Dinner Thurnau & networking		

Workshop summary and benefits for UBT.

The Strategic Scientific Workshop “Digital Innovation, Empowerment, and the MNE” was marked by a dynamic exchange of knowledge and in-depth discussions across different research domains. With an impressive panel of internationally renowned researchers, the event fostered a collaborative environment conducive to idea-sharing, idea-development, and extensive networking. This collaborative atmosphere not only enriched the academic discourse but also paved the way for future research partnerships.

The workshop featured several keynote presentations, highlighting recent research, innovative methodologies, and interconnecting the different research fields. These talks set the tone for the interactive sessions, where participants engaged in lively discussions on key issues surrounding digital innovation and the role of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in driving technological change. The exchange of ideas in these sessions went beyond theoretical discourse, delving into practical applications that are vital in today’s fast-paced, technology-driven global economy. The cross-pollination of ideas from diverse fields not only inspired new research directions but also accelerated ongoing projects, creating an enriching intellectual environment for all participants.

The University of Bayreuth benefits from this workshop, as it aligns with its research priorities, particularly in the field of innovation. By hosting the workshop, the University enhanced its international visibility. University of Bayreuth could position itself as a hub for advanced research on digital transformation and innovation. With this workshop, the University built an international research network, strengthening its research activities in this field, elevating its standing in the global academic community and further cementing its reputation as a center of excellence in research.

More importantly, the workshop played a crucial role in supporting the development of junior scholars at UBT. By offering them the opportunity to connect with world-leading researchers, the event opened doors to potential collaborations, co-authorships, and mentorships. These relationships are invaluable for early-career academics, providing them with the guidance and support needed to excel in their research careers. The connections forged at this workshop have the potential to significantly advance their academic trajectories and contribute to UBT’s growing research output.

Overall, the workshop aimed and fulfilled to bring benefits to the University by promoting interdisciplinary research and fostering a collaborative environment for the advancement of digital innovation.

In detail,

- The workshop brought attention to the cutting-edge research being conducted at the University of Bayreuth, while also signaling to the academic world that the University is at the forefront of addressing novel and pressing topics in digital innovation.
- The visit of these top international researchers brought the University of Bayreuth more into the center of attention within the global academic community.
- The workshop leveraged and further inspired research at the University of Bayreuth with the Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, International Management, and the strong research group on Information Systems. These areas of research were invigorated by the fresh perspectives and insights shared by global thought leaders.
- The workshop enabled and accelerated the research of junior scholars at the University of Bayreuth by providing connections and potential co-authors who are world leading. This, in turn, will further contribute to the proliferation of their academic careers and the University's overall research output.

In summary, the workshop provided numerous benefits to the University of Bayreuth, including enhancing its international visibility, building an international research network, and providing a platform for collaboration and exchange of ideas.

Workshop photos.



Picture 1: Session Prof. Mudambi
Source: own photography



Picture 2: Session Prof. Bouncken and Prof. Pesch
Source: own photography



Picture 3: Session Prof. Schotter
Source: own photography



Picture 4: Short coffee break with lively discussions in the courtyard of Schloss Thurnau
Source: own photography



Picture 5: Lunch Buffet
Source: own photography



Picture 6: Schloss Thurnau
Source: own photography



Picture 7: Research hike



Picture 8: The attendees of the visit to Sanspareil



Picture 9: View during a short hike in Franconian Switzerland after an intensive workshop day

Source: own photography

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