

GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

Service Science and Smart Services: From Theory to Application

Kyrill Meyer, University of Leipzig, Germany

Klaus-Peter Fährnrich, University of Leipzig, Germany

The importance of services in modern economies has been continuously rising during the past decades and now accounts for roughly about two thirds of the gross domestic product (GDP) in most of the western economies. The trend towards services needs to be observed and shaped. Already one can see the rising role of technology for services and a customer orientation leading towards new solutions based offerings instead of classic combinations of product and service. For quite a number of companies services take a system leadership, meaning that not a specific product or offering is core of the business approach, but customer-oriented service solutions drive the company efforts.

But how to bundle existing know-how along with the necessary technical expertise to form dedicated solution offerings that can be placed in the market is the real challenge. Those new socio-technical systems and value chains are mostly complex, have many stakeholders

and define different variants of outcomes for the customer and/or provider. Therefore, the new service economy is closely linked with tools for automation and the management of knowledge and information. We can see hard- and software that is embedded in goods, machines, buildings, means of transportation, logistic chains or manufacturing equipment. Their purpose is to collect information and data through sensors or interactions with users, to process them and to distribute and interact through interfaces in communication networks. In areas such as health, environment, transportation, logistics and communication this leads to what is called Smart Services and will be needed to manage complexity.

The current issue of the *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering and Technology* collects a number of contributions in the area of Smart Services. They will focus on theory and practice alike

and build a bridge between management and application in different high-tech sectors. Originally presented and discussed at the 2012 International Symposium on Service Science in Leipzig, Germany we thank the editorial board of the IJSSMET for the possibility to extend

and refine the work of the contributors for a broader audience.

Kyrill Meyer
Klaus-Peter Fährnich
Guest Editors
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