



## Crisis in the IS Field? A Critical Reflection on the State of the Discipline

[Heinz K. Klein](#), *Temple University*

### Abstract

This paper explores the issue of whether the field of IS is in crisis. To do so, the paper first starts by looking back on where the field has come from. Next, it assesses the status of the IS field by exploring where the field is now. That our current status remains a "fragmented adhocracy" suggests the field may indeed be in crisis or headed for a crisis. This is compounded by the fact that there are two different views on the state of the IS field, each posing its own set of threats. One is the external view of the community (the view of IS from outside the academic field); the other is the internal view (the view from inside the IS community). By analyzing these two views, a better understanding of the problems the field faces emerges. In the next part of the paper, some thoughts are presented on where might the field go from here for overcoming its internal communication deficit. The paper proposes four different types of knowledge for structuring an IS Body of Knowledge (BoK) and following on from that, the value of creating a common BoK for the field. Lastly, the implications arising from the paper's analysis are explored. More specifically, the paper considers various options that are available for overcoming the internal communications deficit the IS field faces. These include changing the way the field thinks about generalizations, changing the institutional publication practices, focusing more on understanding the field's organizational stakeholders, and developing new knowledge creation and transformation networks. If IS as a field can overcome its internal communications deficits, it might ultimately contribute to the societal challenge of developing a deliberative cyber democracy and thereby help to address the social communication deficit which is a feature of modern mass societies.

### Recommended Citation

Klein, Heinz K. (2003) "Crisis in the IS Field? A Critical Reflection on the State of the Discipline," *Journal of the Association for Information Systems* : Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.  
DOI: 10.17705/1jais.00037  
Available at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/jais/vol4/iss1/10>

### DOI

10.17705/1jais.00037

[Download](#)

### SHARE



[Journal Home](#)  
[About this Journal](#)  
[Information for Authors](#)  
[JAIS Policy](#)  
[Editorial Board](#)  
[Forthcoming Papers](#)  
[Awards and Honors](#)  
[Special Issues](#)

[Most Popular Papers](#)

[Browse by Volume](#)

Select an issue:

[All Issues](#) [Browse](#)

Enter search terms:

[Search](#)

[in this journal](#)

[Advanced Search](#)

ISSN : 1 5 3 6 - 9 3 2 3