

**Title:** Departments in collaboration: Potential and challenges for the iSchool

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**Key Participants:** As above.

**Abstract:** The iSchools organization promotes the information field, aka the iField, which applies interdisciplinary approaches to enrich and facilitate the generation, transfer, and curation of data, information, and knowledge by the widespread use of technology in order to maximize human potential. The iField touches upon disciplines such as computer science, library and information science, informatics, information systems, knowledge management, organizational science, sociology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, linguistics, and media studies, alongside a range of applied fields and disciplines such as astronomy, medicine, biology, health, business and industry, history, religion, archaeology, musicology, literature, and art. A number of iSchools have in the past decades merged with other departments, or they collaborate with other departments in significant ways. Although the result is, on the one hand, a high potential for transdisciplinary collaboration, there are on the other hand challenges of collaborating across different scholarly traditions and disciplines. The session explores the impact of these new collaborative configurations on the iField at the participating universities.

**Description:**

- *Purpose and Intended Audience:* The purpose of the SIE is to identify different models of iSchools for collaboration across institutional boundaries, towards creating more interdisciplinary approaches to education and research. Further, the SIE aims to discuss the potential that these collaborations yield, as well as the challenges that need to be addressed before the full potential is realized. Also, to recognize what effects these different models have on the development of the iField at the universities. In summary, the SIE strives to identify major opportunities, problems, and good practices in order to share with all iSchools and beyond. The intended audience includes all iSchools faculty, from deans to junior colleagues, who have experience with similar merging or collaborative arrangements across institutions, are considering a new collaboration model, or are simply interested in how other iSchools address collaboration.
- *Proposed activities including agenda, ramp-up (development), and follow-through:* The SIE will start with presentations of the following iSchool models: 1) the Department of Communication at the University of Copenhagen, based on a merger of the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication and the Department of Information Studies; 2) the iSchool at University of Porto, which combines a collaboration between the Faculty of Arts and Humanities with the Faculty of Engineering; 3) iInstitute, the iSchool at Linnaeus University, which has an overarching virtual structure that brings together about a dozen educational programs and research nodes related to the iField; 4) the Library and Information Department at the University Carlos III (Madrid) which collaborate with the following departments: Engineering, Social Sciences, Statistics, Law and Humanities; 5) the School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering at Indiana University Bloomington, which has departments in information and library science, informatics, computer science, and complex systems engineering. Each presenter will discuss how the merger/collaboration affects the iField at their institution, and which new

scholarly and scientific potentials the merger/collaboration have brought about. After that, all participants will work in small groups, discussing different aspects of and the pros and cons of collaboration across institutions within a university. At the end, each group will briefly present the major pros and cons identified.

- *Relevance to the Conference/Significance to the Field:* The iSchools organization promotes the information field, aka the iField, which applies interdisciplinary approaches to enrich and facilitate the generation, transfer, and curation of data, information, and knowledge by the widespread use of technology in order to maximize human potential. The iField touches upon disciplines such as computer science, library and information science, engineering, business informatics, knowledge management, business, sociology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, linguistics, and media, alongside a range of applied fields and disciplines such as astronomy, medicine, biology, health, history, religion, archaeology, musicology, literature, and art. A number of iSchools have merged with other departments, or significantly collaborate in other ways. The resulting high potential for transdisciplinary collaboration is there, but there also may be challenges to collaborating across differing traditions. What impact do these new structures have on the iField within the universities at hand? These are pertinent topics to many iSchools who may wish to expand their disciplinary boundaries and establish collaborations with other institutions, towards the transdisciplinary iField. This then has the potential to educate students in more wholesome ways, addressing complex problems from different perspectives, and bring similar encompassing approaches to future research. The SIE seems pertinent both in terms of sharing information about existing models through interactive discussions, as well as a wiki page on the different models, challenges and impact.

**Duration:** 1 90-minute session.