**SIKS Masterclass "The End of Theory?  On the role of theories in Information and Knowledge Systems research"**

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**INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the ability to analyze of large amounts of data has called into doubt the need for scientific theories. A simple response to this is that predictive theories are scientific theories too. A more substantial response is that, even though correlation is sufficient for prediction, it is not sufficient for the explanation of effects in terms of causes or underlying mechanisms. Whenever we want to understand the phenomena we study, we should look for causes and mechanisms, which means that we should build scientific theories.

However, too many research papers in information systems, artificial intelligence and related disciplines fail to state their theoretical contribution. Technical research papers may present new designs without adequate explanation of why they work and under which assumptions; empirical papers may make impressive use of statistics without clear contribution to theoretical understanding; or at the other extreme, interpretative research papers may contain convoluted text about theoretical approaches and contributions, of which the contents may disappear into thin air if analyzed closely. In this master class I explain how to write papers that have a clear and defensible theoretical contribution.

The focus of the master class is on scientific inference: How to describe your measurements, how to explain them and how to generalize from them. In addition to treating scientific inference, I explain what scientific theories are in design science and how to use theories in prediction and design, and I review how to set up your research so that you can infer defensible theories from your measurements.

The Master class takes one day and will contain short exercises in which we will analyze fragments of scientific papers. The Master class is aimed at all researchers in the field of Information and Knowledge Systems with a keen interest in research methods and methodology. The Masterclass is part of the Educational Program for SIKS PhD-students. **Therefore, all SIKS PhD-students are strongly encouraged tot participate.**

More details on the location and schedule will be made available soon.

**REGISTRATION**

Participation (lunch included) is free for all SIKS-members (PhD-students and research fellows) and SIKS-alumni. However, registration is mandatory. Please, send an e-mail to **office@siks.nl**and inform Corine that you want to participate. You may also inform her on your dietary needs. For all questions regarding the SIKS Program, regulations for granting ECTS points, etc., please send an e-mail to the SIKS office.