

Sustainability in the Digital Era: from organizations to ecosystems

Sustainability and digital transformation (DT) are two of the most powerful market influences in today's business scenario. For academics, practitioners, and policymakers, both these challenges are becoming key topics, and we can spot their presence in most strategic and political agendas. Indeed, these challenges have generated a vast amount of research contributes about how it will change management practices, and more broadly, business and society (Kiron and Unruh, 2018).

Since digital transformation can play a key role in creating positive value for users and society, when considering the DT phenomenon, the implementation of digital technologies can be linked to the attempt of reaching a more sustainable performance in the long term (Vial, 2019).

The digitalization-sustainability convergence in business and society offers managers different opportunities and challenges, both within the organization, and across firm's boundaries. Indeed, if used within a specific context, digital technologies have a transformative potential, enabling a firm to uncover new ways to create value both internally and along the value chain (Vial et al, 2019).

Nowadays' organizations compete not only in generating new products/services or knowledge, but also in enacting positive social and environmental change (Hsu, Tsai, Yen, 2018).

Within their boundaries, companies are using digital tools for sustainable purposes such as: reducing the environmental impact of their business or mapping their environmental footprint. Companies are also developing sustainable innovations by using clean technologies, greener production processes, thus performing as a sustainable firm.

Since both sustainability and digital transformation are global challenges, they need to be more broadly addressed also across organizational boundaries through a collaborative approach, with the aim to create a positive value for the entire society.

Outside the firm boundaries, the networked connections enabled by digitalization grew along the links of the already existing social and professional collaborations – which is particularly true in the context of SMEs (Nachira et al., 2007). For these reasons, inter-organizational networks can play a crucial role in promoting sustainability and enabling value co-creation. Organizational forms such as (formal or informal) business networks can design resilient architectures, and potentially trigger positive changes in the social and economic environment.

The intersection of these two global trends, however, remains a largely unexplored territory, and the attempts to develop new contributions to understand the long-term and higher-level effects of digital transformation on organizations are needed.

Track main topics

Specific topics include, but are not limited to:

- Managerial and organizational implications of digitalization in the long run
- digitalization-sustainability convergence
- Inter-firm resilient sustainability strategy
- Digital and sustainable ecosystems
- Digital solutions for sustainability

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Digital resilience and sustainability: people, organizations, and society

- Industry 4.0 and the opportunities of DT
- DT enhancing sustainable processes and business practices

We solicit full papers, but it is also possible to submit research-in-progress research or short paper in related fields. Articles exploring new directions or areas are also welcome.

Keywords

Digital transformation; Sustainability; Ecosystems; Organizational Networks; Inter-firm relations; Supply Chain; Organizational implications of digitalization.

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Bios of track Co-Chairs

Cecilia Rossignoli is Full Professor of Organization Science at the University of Verona. Previously she served as Assistant Professor at the Catholic University of Milan for 17 years. She is member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Economics and Management, University of Verona and Padua. She is responsible of the module "Organization Theory". Her research and teaching interests cover the area of Information Systems and organization studies. Recent publications regarded e-Markets and organizational reconfigurations, organizational impact of Business Intelligence Systems, inter-organizational relationships and business networks. On these subjects she has published more than 130 papers and books.

Ludovico Bullini Orlandi is Assistant Professor in Organization and Human Resource Management. He holds the Ph.D. in Economics and Management from the Graduate School of the University of Verona. He teaches Human Resource Management and People Analytics at the University of Verona, and Organization Theory, Public Management, and Human Resource Management at the eCampus Telematic University. He has held visiting periods and research collaborations at the School of Economics and Management at the University of Lund and at the IISM of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. He teaches at the International MBA at the CUOA Business School. His research is focused on digital transformation of organizations and work, and its consequences at macro, meso and micro level of analysis.

Ralf Wagner is a professor for sustainable marketing at the University of Kassel, Germany. He holds a PhD from Bielefeld University and is serving as the national coordinator of the European Master in Business Studies (EMBS) for Germany. His research interests cover the marketing of sustainable products and services, disposal behavior and the application gamification in sustainable marketing. Moreover, he has published in data mining, business intelligence, digitalization of marketing communication and data-driven customer relationship management.

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