

International Conference *Interdisciplinary Information Management Talks (IDIMT 2021)*

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*The Interdisciplinary Information Management Talks (IDIMT)*³ conference is among the conferences traditionally organized by the Department of Systems Analysis of the Faculty of Informatics and Statistics at the Prague University of Economics and Business, in cooperation with Johannes Kepler University Linz.

Every year, the IDIMT conference is devoted to a specific topic related to information technologies and their widespread use in society, as well as to management issues and, last but not least, to the education of IT and management professionals. This year's conference called "Pandemics: Impacts, Strategies and Responses" was inspired by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on these industries.

The conference's reputation is to be in close touch with current trends and a good indicator of future developments. The conference attracted papers from a total of 133 authors, with 46 submitted papers being accepted together with 11 invited papers. The authors have come from nine different countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Greece, Russia, Slovakia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom and USA. It was held in early September (1st–3rd) in the historic town of Kutná Hora, in the pleasant environment of a former Jesuit campus that today houses the Central Bohemian Gallery (GASK).

Due to the pandemic, this year's conference was a hybrid conference - it means that some participants, especially those from the Czech Republic, met at the Central Bohemian Gallery, while participants from Austria met at the AIT (Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH) in Vienna. The 'satellite conference site' in Vienna offers to the Austrian participants met, achieving some feeling of a face-to-face conference. These locations were connected into a conference network, to which other conference participants from other countries connected. The connection architecture was very stable, and it turned out that this conference concept with two main centers could be very well used for hybrid conferences.

The conference program was kicked off in the GASK by Petr Doucek, ordinary professor of the Prague University of Economics and Business. After this official opening, Dr. Christian W. Loesch took the floor to acknowledge Professor Gerhard Chroust's 80th birthday and to thank him for his work in the committees of different conferences, including the IDIMT conference. After that, Professor Gerhard Chroust took the floor, professor emeritus at the University of Linz, who recalled the conference's long tradition and the changes over the twenty-nine years of its existence. The next invited speaker, Christian W. Loesch – IBM's former director for Central and Eastern Europe – brought the conference from this general level down into individual topics, with a presentation entitled "Mutual Impact of Covid and ICT".

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³ More at: <<https://idimt.org>>.

The main content of his presentation was a highly expert explanation of how the Covid-19 pandemic kept changing and has changed the world of information technologies. His perspective of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on ICT starts with the business scenarios of IT companies and their changes over the past year. Another perspective includes the analysis of applications that, due to the pandemic, have spread into cyberspace, such as digital health and robotics applications. In other parts of his presentation, he focused on new materials in technical components, changes in the architecture of both processors and entire information systems. Christian W. Loesch ended his presentation with his vision of the further development of information technologies and their integration into the business environment. The last presentation in the plenary part of the conference was the presentation of Mr. Richard Antonín Novák who introduced the new scientific project "Prague Data Ethics Lab" at the Faculty of Informatics and Statistics. It is an interdisciplinary laboratory at the Department of Systems Analysis of the Prague University of Economics and Business (VŠE), which examines the impact of Big Data/Artificial Intelligence technologies on society. The laboratory's goal is to interconnect different disciplines and workplaces within and outside the Prague University of Economics and Business, and we were thus pleased by the interest of other workplaces, namely the Department of Philosophy of the Prague University of Economics and Business, the Brno University of Technology and the Technical University of Liberec, with which we plan to establish further cooperation. His presentation closed the introductory plenary block. It continued after a break with presentations in the conference's individual sessions.

Among the conference's most-visited sessions were "Digitalization and Industry 4.0 – Changes and Concepts Caused by Covid 19", "Innovations and Strategies in a Pandemic Era", and "Social Media, Fake News, Myths and Ethics". The conference's dominant focus will likely be clear from their names. The "Digitalization and Industry 4.0 – Changes nad Concepts Caused by Covid 19" session presented the results of research on the digitalization of the economy in various countries and on the gradual transition towards a digital economy, primarily in industry, including the Internet of Things. The section also analyzed digitization trends brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. This session was well complemented by the visionary views in the "Trust in Smart Robotics and Autonomous Systems – Resilient Technology, Economy and Society" and traditional security session „Cyber Security in a Digital World". The "Innovations and Strategies in a Pandemic Era" session contained papers that presented specific impacts of Covid-19 on business models that are newly appearing in Economics. This session also included papers on student start-ups and university activities aiming to support student business projects. The "Social Media, Fake News, Myths and Ethics" session covered trending topics connected with the use of social media and its influence on human society under the impact of Covid-19. Especially important topics of this session were fake news and ethics – both categories very sharp related to information boom during the Covid-19 period.

The remaining sessions primarily covered trends in information science. The "Smart Supply Chain" session covered the creation and presentation of a trust mechanism in the digital economic environment. The "Cybersecurity in a Digital World" session, by now a tradition at the conference, was dedicated to cybersecurity and information security – two highly relevant topics today. The theme of security appeared in other sessions as well, amounting to a thread that interwove the entire conference. The "Performance and Sustainability Management and Corporate Social Responsibility" session was a good complement to the conference's reflections on information science. It brought models for the deployment of new technologies back to the real world of costs and benefits.

As usual, the members of the "Digital Transformation in Crisis Management" section were high-quality experts. The section provided considerations and recommendations that should be implemented during a crisis. We could see a significant change brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic since it was possible to verify various proposed measures and recommendations based on the experience from the last year's pandemic. Interesting was the "COVID-19's Impact on Enterprise Software Development" section that

focused on the impact of the pandemic on the work of work teams that develop software. A completely new contribution of the conference was the “COVID-19’s Influence on Learning and Teaching” section that discussed the effects of the epidemic on the processes in teaching ICT professionals, presented the experience with used online teaching methods and evaluated the advantages and weaknesses of these methods.

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