Uncovering Conceptual Gaps in Introductory IS Textbooks

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ABSTRACT

This study performs an exploration of the relationship between introductory IS textbooks and the body of knowledge represented by the set of “super classic” IS publications. Textbooks play a critical role of introducing the IS field to IS majors, describing what constitutes mainstream IS knowledge and communicating to other disciplines and their stakeholders the value of the IS field. The goal of this research is to examine the content of these textbooks, and in doing so analyze how introductory IS textbooks are designed, how well they agree on the concepts they are communicating and whether they mirror the body of knowledge that is agreed by most IS scholars. The findings of the study suggest that the content of IS textbooks is rather fragmented, and is not representative of the body of knowledge that IS scholars consider important. This gap between IS research and IS textbooks may ultimately result in textbooks that contain a lot of information but short on the content that will contribute to the legitimacy of the IS field.

Keywords: Information Systems (IS) education, IS research, citation analysis, introductory textbooks, introduction to IS course, classic IS publications