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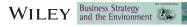
WILEY | Business Strategy and the Environment

Special issue "Sustainability in the digital age"

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | Aim and motivation

The increasing proliferation of digital technologies arguably holds much potential for solving some of society's most pressing, grand challenges such as climate change, poverty, or resource depletion (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016). Smart algorithms, connected devices, and big data support the reorganization of supply chains, enable more resource and energy-efficient consumption, and accelerate the diffusion of sustainable innovation. Yet, digitally enabled work formats, ubiquitous e-commerce, and the sharing economy also raise new issues that cast doubt on the digital economy's net effect on sustainable development. For example, social and ethical concerns such as data privacy and consumer lock-in point to a dark side of the digital economy (Acquier, Daudigeos, & Pinkse, 2017). Against this background, the objective of the proposed special issue is to gather high-quality research that deals with the question of how sustainability looks like in the digital age. It aims to set an agenda for future research and inform policy-makers and managers about both the opportunities and challenges arising from the interplay of digital technologies and sustainable development. We invite contributions in the following three topic areas:

1. Circular, shared, smart. The organization of urban and industrial transformation

Artificial intelligence and the Internet of things will play a critical role in transforming sectors such as agriculture, health care, and mobility to greater sustainability. Smart cities and the circular, shared economy can change consumption and lifestyle patterns, but they also require cross-sector collaborations and shared infrastructures. Research questions in this focal area may cover the following:

- What is the effect of connected technologies on the way we live, work, and consume? How do organizations use digital technologies to green urban spaces and meet increasing food, materials, and energy needs?
- How to organize data ownership and cybersecurity in smart cities and regions? What are new responsibilities for organizations and citizens in a digital economy?

- Which tensions arise in designing and operating shared technology infrastructures? How to combine public, private, and hybrid value capturing logics?

2. Modularized, customized, always-on. The sustainability of new work

Digital technologies profoundly change the way we collaborate in ecosystems and platforms, organize decision making and power, and govern interorganizational partnerships. Citizen engagement platforms, micro-jobbing sites, and watchdog-portals are just a few examples that reflect changes in the way the contemporary organization interacts with its stakeholders. Research questions in this area may cover the following:

- What is the effect of new work formats on supply chains and product lifecycles? Do digital technologies improve or reinforce issues such as precarious work and the marginalization of the poor?
- How do organizations tackle critical issues such as data security and inclusiveness related to their social responsibility? Which role do online tools and social media play for the organization of social activism?
- How can digital technologies support both interorganizational and intraorganizational collaboration for sustainability? Which role do digital technologies play, for instance, in facilitating the dialogue on CSR between multiple stakeholders?

3. Performance, impact, scalability. The diffusion of sustainable innovation

Digital technologies create exciting opportunities for organizations to come up with new business models and solutions to societal problems that can scale beyond local contexts. Yet, many promising initiatives currently remain confined to pilot projects and experimental settings such as urban or living labs. Submissions in this area may cover the following:

- What is the effect of technologies such as augmented reality, blockchain, drones, and 3D printing on transforming current patterns of production and consumption? How to model, simulate, and validate the impact of innovation on sustainability?

- How do sustainable technologies, product-service systems, and business models diffuse to the mass market? How do actors such as entrepreneurs and incumbents interact during the formation of new markets?

- How can digital technologies help organizations to interact with users? How can they support the creation of a market need for sustainable products and solutions?

The overarching goal of this special issue, therefore, is to explore the influence of the digital age on sustainability in three areas: the living environment, the work environment, and the diffusion of sustainable innovation. It aims to unravel future areas of sustainability research and inform policy makers and managers about the upcoming opportunities and challenges. We invite authors from various scholarly disciplines (e.g., management, entrepreneurship, innovation, environmental studies, information systems, and organization studies) to contribute.

2 | SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Manuscripts must adhere strictly to BSE's formatting requirements: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/10990836/homepage/forauthors.html. All submissions will undergo a double-blind review process.

Before submitting a manuscript, there is the opportunity to discuss it at the GRONEN Research Conference 2020 in Lisbon, Portugal (June 17-19, 2020), which will have the theme: "All systems go!? Sustainability in the Digital Age": http://www.gronenonline.com/_gronen1/conference2020/ Participation in the conference is not a requirement for submitting to the Special Issue.

Please send manuscripts and questions regarding the special issue to the guest editors via specialissue.bse@smartcityinnovationlab.com.

Conference Submission Deadline: January 20, 2020

SI Submission Deadline: September 20, 2020

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