iS
CHANNEL

Editorial – From the Editor-in-Chief

We are proud to present to you the 20th anniversary edition of the iSCHANNEL, the student-run journal of the LSE's MSc in Management of Information Systems and Digital Innovation (MISDI). Each year, the new MISDI cohort inherits the same task as its predecessors: to select their strongest work on the social study of information systems through double-blind peer review. Each edition therefore offers a snapshot of the questions that year's cohort chose to pursue and debate. This year's ten contributions treat technology less as a set of capabilities and more as a set of relationships, asking who is positioned around a system and with what consequences. The technologies examined in this edition range from AI assistants in clinical practice to public-sector data infrastructure and educational software.

Emphasising the socio-technical nature of information systems, the articles adopt neither a technologically deterministic nor a purely social-constructivist position. Since the technology alone rarely explains the outcomes they describe, we have grouped them by the question they ask rather than by the system they study. The first group asks whether anyone outside an AI system can verify the basis of its claims, and what follows when they cannot. The second follows data across organisational and legal boundaries, asking whether obligations and value travel with it. The third turns to research itself, examining how the lenses the field adopts shape what it finds. The following sections introduce each group in turn, together with its contributions and authors.

The volume begins where the consequences of an AI claim can arrive before its verification. **Jemimah Jeremiah** examines retrieval-augmented generation in the AI Airlock, a regulatory sandbox run by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency with the NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care. She finds that grounding a model in curated clinical guidance relocates accountability rather than settling it. In the first of her two contributions, **Caroline Ziegler** examines one such body of curated guidance. Her structured walkthrough of AMBOSS's AI assistant finds the clinical content consistently accurate. Yet differences in the strength and certainty of the underlying evidence are often flattened during editorial curation, before the model synthesises anything, and fluent presentation lends the result an authority the evidence does not always support. **Claudia Voysest** examines how safety is established in the autonomous vehicle industry, where simulation has become the primary evidence base because real-world driving cannot demonstrate safety within any practical timeframe. Taking Waymo as an illustrative case, she reads the arrangement as a problem of delegation: firms are left responsible for producing the evidence without any external party positioned to verify it.

The next three articles turn from what can be seen inside a system to what happens when data leaves the setting it came from. **Costanza Fisogni** studies the outsourcing of public-sector data infrastructure and argues that legal compliance does not amount to legitimacy. The public body keeps the lawful basis while delegating the processing, so the arrangement looks accountable while what passes to the contractor is an organisational logic as well as a dataset**. Stefan Weiss** approaches the same architecture from the commercial side, asking why legacy carmakers struggle to build a digital value loop. Taking Volkswagen as his case, he finds that the barriers are not primarily technical, and locates them across the vehicle, the customer relationship and the firm's incentives. **Wala Mohammed** asks what happens once data has crossed into a model and cannot readily be retrieved. Reviewing the UK GDPR against generative AI and automated decision-making systems, she shows why the rights to erasure, rectification and explanation falter against architectures that encode data parametrically, and why the statutory safeguards accompanying the Data Use and Access Act 2025 rest on an explainability those architectures rarely provide.

The final four articles turn to the different streams within information systems research, and to the way the perspective a study adopts shapes what it finds. In her second contribution, **Caroline Ziegler** reviews twenty-five years of health information system evaluation and finds that the long-standing disputes over evidence, success and accountability do not come from thin data. Instead, they follow from different assumptions about what technology is and what evaluation is for. **Mina Buchholz** finds a comparable pattern in higher education. Studies of intelligent tutoring systems cluster under a techno-rational lens while studies of AI in education cluster under a sociomaterial one, although the two terms are used almost interchangeably in practice, so the

vocabulary a researcher adopts already carries theoretical commitments. **Nikolaus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg** questions the assumptions on which benefit-oriented theories of social media rest and finds that the two sides of the debate measure different things: positive accounts explain perceived benefit and user motivation, while critical accounts document structural harms such as disinformation, data collection and loss of control. The claimed benefits turn out to be conditional, the disadvantages better documented. The volume closes with **Stefan Weiss**, whose essay explains why the automation and augmentation narratives coexist rather than competing. The divergence follows from analytical level and task type, and he introduces speculative automation to describe firm decisions made in anticipation of capabilities not yet in place.

For many of us, producing this edition was our first contribution to an academic journal. We experienced the review cycle as authors, reviewers and editors, and engaged with each other's work far more closely than coursework usually requires. Running a double-blind process within the cohort, whose members know one another's research interests well, brought its own challenges. Allocating reviewers so that nobody assessed a paper they could identify, or one close to their own, took more care than we expected. In doing so, we came to understand why anonymous review matters, rather than simply following its rules. None of this would have been possible without the many people who gave their time to the journal this year.

We thank every author and reviewer who contributed to this 20th edition, and in particular the additional reviewers who assessed submissions from members of the editorial team. I am also deeply grateful to this year's editorial team, without whose steady support the edition could not have been completed. Particular thanks go to Stefan Weiss and Nikolaus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg for organising the 20th anniversary conference in April; to Katharina Randelzhofer for researching and presenting the journal's history; to Marta Ji Guillén for writing up the conference report; to Ayah Bakkri for promoting the journal with striking visuals and clear communication; to Damla Bilginogulla, Wala Mohammed and Vishal Gupta for their work as section editors. Finally, we thank Dr Will Venters, our faculty editor; Lucy Lambe of LSE Press, who patiently answered every question we brought her; and Yao Ma, our editorial consultant, whose experience of guiding past editorial teams made his advice especially valuable.

Many of the questions in this volume apply to the journal itself. As AI tools enter research and review, a student journal faces the same risk its authors describe elsewhere: if reviewers rely on systems whose reasoning they cannot inspect, review may remain in place while losing its ability to act. We hope future editorial teams will decide deliberately which parts of the process stay with human reviewers, be transparent about the rest, and keep iSCHANNEL running for at least another 20 years.

Mina Buchholz

Editor-in-Chief

MSc Management of Information Systems and Digital Innovation
Department of Management
London School of Economics and Political Science