

# 2017 Annual Seminar of the Southern African Chapter of the Association for Information Systems (AISSAC)

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**26<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

**Location: Black Mountain Hotel, Thaba Nchu, Free State, South Africa**

**Venue: Wildebeest**

**Registration: 8:00-8:30**

## **THEME OF THE SEMINAR**

The theme of the seminar will be "Social Inclusion in Southern African Society".

Silver (2007) conceptualizes social exclusion (or marginalization) as “detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live”. As the converse, social inclusion focuses on enabling groups and individuals to participate fully in such activities. Trauth (2017), renowned for her work on social inclusion and gender, and founding president of the AIS SIG Social Inclusion, states that the relevant aspects of human diversity to the social inclusion debate include “age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status” (2017: 10).

Trauth (2017) suggests that in researching and, preferably, addressing social inclusion, we must focus not just on barriers to inclusion, but also on how people can exercise their own agency to resist exclusion and on understanding how interventions can be put in place to overcome barriers to inclusion. Thus, part of our role as a community of IS scholars may be to offer support and interventions, but we are yet to understand what form these may take. This seminar aims to address the inclusion and exclusion issues that Southern African’s may face in this changing world of digital innovation and to explore our role as academics in offering support for fostering greater inclusion.

## **AIM OF SEMINAR**

The purpose of the seminar is to stimulate debate on social inclusion in Southern African society, to promote understanding of social inclusion and exclusion issues that Southern Africans may face in this increasingly digital world, and to explore our role as academics in addressing these issues.

## **PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME**

Prof Michelle Carter will introduce the theme of social inclusion. This will be followed by a short paper session following the seminar theme and a panel discussion on our role as academics in public and political discourse in terms of addressing social inclusion issues.

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Professor Michelle Carter of Washington State University will be delivering the keynote on the topic of 'Social inclusion and identity: Can we be equal and different?'

Abstract: Social inclusion is concerned with enabling all individuals and groups to fully participate in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the societies in which they live. Efforts to achieve inclusion often focus on improving access to resources, institutions, and opportunities – to housing, to education, to jobs, etc. – for people who have been excluded (or disadvantaged). Underpinning this focus, is the assumption that the socially excluded need help assimilating into the dominant social structures that led to and sustained their disadvantaged state. By definition, assimilation requires adaptation to the cultures of dominant social groups that prescribed the terms of participation in the first place. Achieving inclusion, thus, comes at the cost of existing cultural identities. Exclusion still occurs, even when inclusion was the intent. This begs the questions: *Are inclusion and identity incompatible? Can we be equal and different?*

### **SEMINAR COST**

**Seminar Fee: R1500**

**Student Fee: R800**

### **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

#### **Keynote Speaker: Michelle Carter, Washington State University**

Michelle Carter is the current President of the AIS Special Interest Group on Social Inclusion. She is an assistant professor at Washington State University's Carson College of Business and an affiliate assistant professor in the Information School at the University of Washington. She earned her PhD in Management (Information Systems) from Clemson University, South Carolina. Michelle's current research focuses how people engage with an increasingly digital world. Her specific interests include ITs' involvement in identity, inclusion, and social change, IT use behaviors, and information systems management. Michelle's work has appeared in journals such as *MIS Quarterly*, *ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems*, the *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Information & Management*, *Communications of the AIS*, and *MISQ Executive*. She previously served as a Senior Editor for *Information Technology & People*. In 2016, Michelle was recognized for her research and service contributions to the IS field, as a recipient of the AIS Early Career Award.

#### **Panellists:**

In addition to Prof. Carter, the panel will comprise:

**Robert Davison** is a Professor of Information Systems at the City University of Hong Kong. His current research focuses on virtual Knowledge Management and Collaboration in Chinese SMEs. He has published over 200 articles in a variety of journals and conferences. Robert is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Information Systems Journal* and the *Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*. As an Editor, he promotes social inclusion and contextual sensitivity. Home Page:

<http://www.is.cityu.edu.hk/staff/isrobert>

Professor Davison views the IS discipline as highly contextual, i.e. the critical success factors of one context may not seamlessly apply to another. Therefore, suggests that we need to examine each context separately. We can learn from the literature, but we have to be open to new ideas, new practices, and new contexts. As such, he views, social inclusion as involving an appreciation of differences and divergent viewpoints. He also believes that we should further enrich our AIS culture with the variety of unique contexts and cultures that characterize developing country contexts.

**Wallace Chigona** is a Professor in Information Systems at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. His research focuses on the use of ICTs for human development and ICT policy. He has researched on the use and impact of ICTs amongst the disadvantaged communities in different African Countries. Prof Chigona has published over 120 peer-reviewed research papers; mainly in the area of ICT4D and he is currently on the editorial boards of Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries (EJISDC) as well as on the African Journal of Information Systems. Prof Chigona is rated as an Established Researcher by the South African National Research Foundation (NRF). He has collaborated on research projects with international scholars from Tanzania, Malawi, United Kingdom, Switzerland and other South African universities. Prof Chigona is currently the IFIP 9.4 Africa and the Middle East representative and a member of (i) UNESCO/Netexplo Advisory Board; (ii) the Communication Policy Research for Global South.

**Emma Coleman** is a Senior Lecturer in Information Systems specialising in qualitative research methodology and philosophy, with further research interests in social inclusion and inequality, user resistance to IS, health and public sector IS, and mobile technologies. She is Senior Editor (IS) for the South African Computer Journal and President of the AIS South African Chapter. She a member of the AIS Special Interest Groups on Social Inclusion (SIGSI), Philosophy and Epistemology in Information Systems (SIGPHIL) and the AIS Women's Network College (AISWN). She is part of the SIG Social Inclusion Task Force, and will be Co-Chair of the SIG Social Inclusion Post ICIS Workshop in 2017.

Dr Coleman views social inclusion as important to both local and international IS communities. She believes that devising strategies for greater inclusion will strengthen the capabilities and opportunities of IS academics locally and globally, and in turn increase the research impact of the field.