

Call for Participation

Digital Sovereignty

Pre-ECIS 2026 - Workshop | 14 June 2026, 8.30 am | Milan, Italy

Organizers of the Paper Development Workshop and Guest Editors of the Special Issue

Prof. Petter Nielsen	University of Oslo, Norway
Dr. Laura Brandimarte	University of Arizona, USA
Dr. Ben Eaton	Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Prof. Juliana Sutanto	Monash University, Australia
Dr. Mary Tate	Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Prof. Daniel J. Veit	University of Augsburg, Germany

Dates and Organization

Submission deadline:	20 May 2026 (11.59 pm CEST)
Notification:	22 May 2026
Workshop time and date:	14 June 2026, 8.30 am – 12.30 pm (CEST)
Location:	To be announced in the program
Format:	Half day workshop with presentations and interaction

Why this special issue and workshop?

Digital technologies, digital infrastructures, and platform ecosystems have become critical resources for nations, organisations, communities, and individuals. As a result, questions of who controls digital infrastructures, who governs data, and who sets the rules for digital innovation have become concerns for public administration, economic strategy, and everyday life (Zuboff 2022). Artificial intelligence (AI) is perhaps the domain where the question of digital sovereignty is currently most acute — raising issues of dependence, available alternatives, and open-source solutions.

In this workshop and special issue, we use digital sovereignty to refer to the practical capacity of an actor (an individual, community, organisation, or nation) to make and enforce choices about how digital systems are sourced, procured, designed, governed, and used as well as to avoid, reshape, or exit dependencies that create risks to autonomy, rights, resilience, or collective values. This includes, but is not limited to, data governance and protection, reliance on global platform providers, service bundling and forced adoption, interoperability and standards, “choke points”, and transparency and control over AI models.

Digital sovereignty has become entrenched in the political rhetoric of countries and regions, such as Denmark, where municipalities and the Ministry of Digital Affairs are migrating from Microsoft to open-source software (EU 2025a), the EU with its Declaration

for European Digital Sovereignty (EU 2025b), the migration strategy of many municipalities and states of Germany towards open-source (EU 2024), the digital nation-state building efforts of China, India and South Africa (Jiang 2024) and initiatives such as the Principles of Māori Data Sovereignty protecting the rights of indigenous populations (Temanararaunga 2025). While these developments have captured the attention of various research fields, including policy (Pohle and Thiel 2020), philosophy of information (Floridi 2014), internet governance (DeNardis 2014) and Law (Koops et al. 2016), many of these “black-box” the technologies involved. Digital sovereignty does also remain primarily as visions rather than accomplishments, and transition strategies are needed. Surprisingly, there remains comparatively limited published information systems research on the topic.

Yet information systems research should have much to contribute, given its socio-technical approach to the study of digital technologies in context. There is a substantial body of information systems research relevant to the digital sovereignty discourse by addressing questions including how states and organisations can navigate global digital ecosystems, how digital architectures and governance standards can be designed to support digital sovereignty, how digital sovereignty influences digital innovation and the short- and long-term implications for individuals' and communities' autonomy, rights, resilience and risks.

Examples of relevant information systems research includes information infrastructure research (Hanseth and Lyytinen 2010) which has explored control and interdependencies in large-scale and global information systems. Digital innovation research (Lyytinen et al. 2016) has described the role of ecosystems, control points (Hanseth and Modol 2021) and generativity (Bygstad 2017) in digital innovation. Research on digital platforms has addressed issues of architecture and how to govern platforms (Constantinides 2018) and research on open-source software and digital public goods on how to facilitate autonomy, resilience, sustainability (Braa et al. 2004, Veit and Thatcher 2023) and develop public value (Nicholson et al. 2022). The body of information systems research on the human-artificial intelligence relationship related to, for example, transparency and norms (Grisold et al. 2025) is growing.

The contributions we are looking for:

In this workshop and special issue, we invite empirically grounded and theoretically ambitious research that explains digital sovereignty as a socio-technical accomplishment including its tensions, trade-offs, and unintended consequences. We also welcome conceptual or review papers on the topic.

While we primarily expect papers based on qualitative research, we also welcome quantitative contributions, provided they emphasise the research context and the theoretical and practical implications of their findings. Papers must have a substantial information systems contribution foregrounding digital technologies in context,

emphasising the specific nature of digital technologies, infrastructures, and platforms and their social implications.

Topics include but are not limited to

- Conceptual and theoretical foundations of digital sovereignty in information systems and its unique properties compared to other conceptualizations of sovereignty
- Critical investigations of the sovereignty paradox – the sacrifice of sovereignty for the utility and efficiency of big-tech, related to path dependencies, shadow sovereignty and exit strategies
- The exercise of power by dominant players and its impact
- The specific sovereignty challenges of digital infrastructure, platforms, AI and other emerging technologies such as quantum computing
- Sovereignty-by-design: interoperability, standards, modularity, API governance, devolved, horizontal and open architectures
- Open-source, digital public goods, and open data commons as strategies for autonomy, resilience, and public value
- AI for managing sovereign digital infrastructures
- Global, regional and local governance, regulation and policy regarding data, platforms and infrastructures, and governance models
- Public sector digital sovereignty, including procurement, vendor lock-in, interoperability and capability building
- Surveillance, digital identity, biometrics, and the sovereignty implications for rights and democratic accountability
- Digital sovereignty in development and “post-aid” contexts: shifting dependencies, infrastructures at scale, and long-term sustainability
- Indigenous and minority groups disadvantaged by colonisation value sovereignty, especially over their data, including protection from misuse, responsible stewardship, and maintaining integrity
- Managing capability, skills, and technology gaps and deficits
- Managing choke points in critical technical layers
- Managing national policy alignment

Workshop format

Please submit extended abstracts sketching out an idea for a study/contribution of 3 pages max. (incl. all tables, figures and references) formatted following the Author Guidelines by the Information Systems Journal:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/13652575/homepage/forauthors.html>

The workshop will be held as an interactive format with short pitch-presentations followed by a discussion of each accepted abstract.

Contact and submission

Please submit your contributions as one single PDF document via e-mail no later than **20 May 2026 12.59 pm (CEST)** to the following persons:

Prof. Daniel J. Veit (daniel.veil@uni-a.de) and
Dr. Laura Brandimarte (lbrandimarte@arizona.edu)

Special Issue

This workshop is the first out of several Paper Development Workshops for the Special Issue on Digital Sovereignty of the Information Systems Journal. Details on the Call for Papers is published here:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/13652575/homepage/call-for-papers/si-2026-000456>

Note: Abstracts, accepted and discussed for a Paper Development workshop can be but must not be the starting point for the development of a full submission to the Special Issue of ISJ.

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- Ben Eaton, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
- Juliana Sutanto, Monash University, Australia
- Mary Tate, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
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