

Internet and the Digital Economy Introduction to Track

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The Internet, intranets, and extranets are no longer a novelty. They permeate our everyday lives – at work, home and play. The exponential growth of this global electronic infrastructure has led to a burgeoning interest in its technical underpinnings, potential applications, and impact on our everyday lives. Of particular interest has been the rise of electronic commerce in its various forms including, business-to-consumer, business-to-business, government-to-business and government-to-consumer, as well as intra-business applications.

This burgeoning interest in the global electronic infrastructure and digital economy is reflected in the growth of this track over the past few years – from its minitrack status a few years ago to its current status as a regular track. This year the track consists of 14 minitracks. While each minitrack focuses on a different topic, there are two broad themes that run through them. The first set of minitracks focuses on the technical and infrastructure issues associated with Internet-based systems. These minitracks examine methodologies for system development, issues in the engineering of systems, infrastructure design issues, and security. The second set of minitracks focuses on the business and application issues. These minitracks examine business to business e-commerce, communities, customer relationship management, intellectual property rights, managing information, and marketing, just to name a few.

As Yogi Berra once said, “You got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.” In part, this aphorism sums up the general experience with the Internet and digital economy. Growth continues to be chaotic and volatile, and fashion turns to fads in a matter of weeks, days, or minutes. This makes it difficult to establish a set of “hard and fast” research areas. However, this is also what makes this particular track so interesting. The global electronic infrastructure continues to be an emerging technology with new applications and new impacts ripe for research.