



The Swedish Research School of Management and Information Technology

All former Ph.D. candidates from the Research School of Management and Information Technology (MIT) that have ended their participation at the research school with a licentiate or doctoral degree receive this bi-annual letter. The Alumni Letter offers information about MIT activities, alumni members, and other information related to the research school. Peter Ekman*, MIT Deputy Dean and Alumni Letter Editor, appreciates alumni information that can be of interest to its readership ■

Alumni Letter



2024:1

A Recent Alumni

Todd Drennan defended his thesis *Global consumer online purchase intention: A relationship approach at Mälardalen University June 11.*

Congratulations Todd, can you tell me what your thesis is about?

Thank you! My thesis focuses on two key contributions rooted in a scientific realist orientation. First, it demonstrates that cues and relational factors significantly impact global consumer purchase intention. Second, it establishes that a relational approach is not only suitable but also theoretically generalizable for understanding online purchase intention on a global scale. I call it a relational approach because I do not study the actual relationships themselves. However, by investigating factors influencing online purchase intention, my research enhances the consumer-retailer relationship for mutual benefit.

And you got a position at W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University already this fall – can you tell us about the school and what you be doing there?

I am very excited to be joining the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University (ASU) this fall. ASU is one of the largest universities in the United States in terms of enrollment, and the W.P. Carey



Todd Drennan

School of Business is one of the largest business schools in the country. ASU is repeatedly ranked number one in innovation, sustainability, and global impact. The school is known for its strong emphasis on innovation, research, and its commitment to providing high-quality education to a diverse student body.

As a Clinical Assistant Professor of Marketing, I will be focused on both teaching and research. One of my key responsibilities will be to play a major role in developing and enhancing the digital marketing courses. This involves updating the curriculum to reflect the latest trends and technologies in digital marketing and ensuring that the courses offer practical, real-world applications that can benefit students in their future careers. Additionally, I will be conducting research that contributes to the field of marketing, with a particular focus on digital marketing. I am thrilled to be a part of such a dynamic and forward-thinking institution and look forward to contributing to its ongoing success and reputation.

Looking back on your time as a PhD student – do you have any good memories from the research school?

I have many fond memories from my time with the research school. The courses were intellectually stimulating, and the conferences

offered immense learning opportunities and insights. The incredible sense of community, with its blend of collegiality and friendship, was remarkable. I was continually amazed by the support and genuine sense of caring and collaboration everyone showed. I will particularly miss the conferences, which were always a highlight, bringing together brilliant minds and fostering rich discussions. The experiences and relationships I built there have left a lasting impact, and I look forward to carrying those lessons forward in my career.

Thanks, and good luck!

Thank you so much! I appreciate the opportunity to share my experiences. I am excited for the journey ahead and look forward to staying connected. Best wishes to everyone ■

Do you know that...

...as an alumni, you can apply for travel and accommodation costs for participating at our conferences (e.g., being a track chair at MITSC or MITAC which is beneficial for your CV). Contact Christina Keller** or Peter Ekman* for more information.

MITAC2024 took place at Uppsala University

This year's spring conference was held 16-18 April. The first keynote was offered by professor Viswanath Venkatesh from Virginia Tech that presented his research on technology acceptance. This was followed by a keynote about different career paths during the post doc period by our alumni Carl Cederström and Lisen Selander. The Best Reviewer Award was given Amirhossein Gharai from Linköping University.

MIT Alumni Update

Hi Josina – you defended your thesis at Karlstad University 2019, and you been a highly active researcher since then. Where are you and with what are you working now?

I am based at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) in Norway. The school is perched along the shores of Alkerselva, the often-raging river dividing the city of Oslo. Here I teach and do research on service design, mostly with a focus on health and care. I have spent the last four years co-leading a major research project called the Center for Connected Care (C3), in collaboration with municipalities, hospitals and health technology companies. Through this work, I have been developing a more critical perspective on service design, particularly with attention to the different logics that we advance when designing in service systems.

You and Kaisa Koskela-Huotari received the best paper award from Journal of Service Research in 2022 for the paper “Building Reflexivity Using Service Design Methods.” Can you describe what service design is and what the paper was about?

Ah yes, that award was a lovely surprise. I got a text from my Ph.D. supervisor, Bård Tronvoll, congratulating me because I missed the conference where the award was given out, and I just sent a text back saying – “I think you have the wrong person”. But he did

not, and it was a lovely recognition to receive with Kaisa for our work.

So basically, we view service design as a process of intentionally shaping social structures, like shared norms, rules, roles, values and beliefs, toward the emergence of desired forms of value co-creation. This more systemic understanding extends well beyond earlier thinking about service design that tends to focus on crafting touchpoints and service interfaces to improve the customer experience. By seeing social structures as design materials, practitioners can better work toward long-term change in service systems.

Our paper posits that in order to transform service systems by intentionally shaping social structures, actors must first become aware of the social structures that are influencing them, or what we call building reflexivity, in order to avoid inadvertently reproducing these structures. So, this study explores how service design methods help us to building this reflexivity by combining learnings from both service design practice and theory on reflexivity. Through this process, we identify six modes of reflexivity enabled by service design methods and three core mechanisms by which reflexivity can be

built, to enable actors to work toward intentionally transformative change.

Finally, do you have any reflections on how your time in the research school contributed to your career?

The courses and conferences at the research school helped me build rigor as researcher. Looking back, I am really grateful for the time I spent traveling to Uppsala, Stockholm, and Gothenburg on the train for courses and the regular MIT conferences. These activities sharpened the research skills and tools that I continue to use, and enhance the impact of my work. Through discussions with other students and faculty, I also acquired a “taste” for thorough, critical academic work and this taste is what keeps pushing me forward ■



Josina Vink ►
(AHO Staff photo)

Host institution



Associated institutions

