The Swedish Research School of Management and Information Technology

Alumni Letter

2020:1

MIT doctoral thesis #119

Early this summer, Emelie Havemo defended her doctoral thesis "Five essays on visuality in accounting" at Linköping University.

Hi Emelie – can you give us an elevator version of your thesis?

I have studied the uses of pictures in accounting! The amount of visuals used in accounting and reporting has increased in the past decades, and I think this is interesting since accounting is traditionally quite numbers-based. My thesis explores the visual premises of accounting, and whether "visuality" is a blessing or a threat to accounting (the conclusion is that it is a bit of both, depending on your perspective). I show that visuals, such as business model diagrams and CEO photos, play an important role in accounting these days. Visuality contributes to how organizations represent themselves as legitimate actors in society, and I argue that we need more visual accounting literacy to keep up with these developments!

How was the Ph.D. thesis defense arranged, business as usual, or online? And how did it affect the discussion between you and the opponent?

The defense was organized as an online Zoom webinar. The opponent, committee, supervisors, and audience participated from their own homes. It worked really-well, even better than expected! Johan Alvehus from Lund University was an excellent discussant who introduced the thesis and then led the discussion. He did not present any slides, showing only a few visualizations to illustrate key points. This helped to shift the focus of the defense from presentation to dialogue. As a visual researcher, I probably shouldn't admit this… but in this case, the absence of visualizations helped to create a digital space for dialogue.

Emelie Havemo, LiU (private photography)

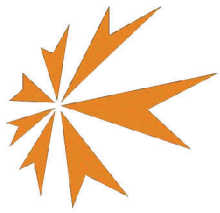**What have been the main benefit of being part of the research school of Management and IT?**

Two things stand out for me as I look back at the research school experience. The opportunity to present and discuss my own and others' work at the conferences has really improved my confidence as a researcher and also increased my understanding of how "research conversation" works at an accelerated pace compared to colleagues that did not belong to the research school. Second, meeting other Ph.D. students who face similar challenges at other universities, learning together in the courses, and reviewing each other's research has made the process of being a Ph.D. student a little easier and far more interesting!

What will you do next?

More research! I will continue teaching and doing research at Linköping University and will try to get the last few papers from the thesis published. After that, I will continue to explore the visual dimension of organizations and hopefully add a few new perspectives, probably in collaboration with other researchers. Anyone interested in visualization is welcome to get in touch with me!

Thanks for the interview!

Thank you! ■

Alumni Letter

MIT Alumni Update

Hi Marcus Lippert – you defended your Ph.D. thesis (MIT Ph.D. #45) in 2013 but had at that point in time already started a business. What kind of company was it?

The company focused on IT outsourcing services from India, and mainly software development.

Marcus Lippert, STEM Products (private photo)

What do you do today?

Today I work in the education business as a product manager for STEM products to Schools in the Nordic countries at the company Lekolar.

Is there any knowledge or skill you acquired as a Ph.D. candidate that you especially appreciate in your current business.

Yes, the ability to go from nothing, a blank page, to a complete doctoral thesis is an amazing experience affecting even my day-to-day work as well as when starting a new venture.

Finally, do you have any good anecdotes from your time at the research school?

I remember when one of the professors at MIT said that if one does not finish the thesis, it is like have been in jail in one's CV! Then I knew; failure is not in option [laughs]!

Thank you for the update and memories!
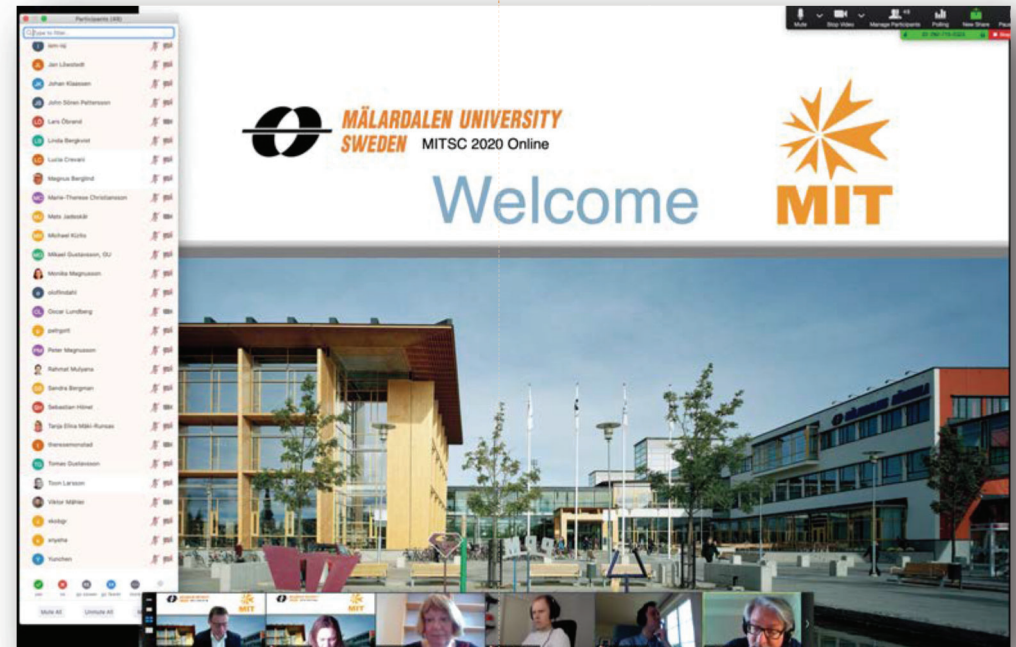Thanks! ◼

MITSC2020 at MDU Online

This year the Swedish Research School of Management & Information Technology (MIT) should have had its spring conference at Mälardalen University (MDU) at the Västerås campus, but it had to go online due to the Corona pandemic

The spring conference did with a very short notice switch from a gathering in Västerås to an online conference due to the guidelines from the Public Health Agency of Sweden. Thus, the faculty and Ph.D. students from Mälardalen University did – in parallel with discussing their work – run and monitor five different Zoom (conference system) sessions.

The conference program was converted into a Google Sheets format which allowed all participants to access the program as well as see changes in real-time.

MITSC had 60 participants in the common session and then four parallel sessions with presentations and thesis draft defenses. Participants were positively surprised by that the sessions became more focused in the online environment. The described downside was the lack of the social program the regular conferences comes with. ◼

The National Research School of Management and Information Technology Universities

Host   *Associated*

Picture from the conference

Contact information *peter.ekman@mdh.se, tel. +46(0)21-101417. **christina.Keller@ju.se, tel. +46(0)36-101778 ◼