

*The frequent citations to IS research suggest  
its role in advancing science.*

## IS INFORMATION SYSTEMS A REFERENCE DISCIPLINE?

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**T**he notion of information systems (IS) being an applied discipline drawing upon other disciplines has been held as conventional wisdom by IS researchers for the past two decades [2]. IS has been conceived as growing from other foundational fields, such as computer science, management science, and organization science [4]. Recently, this conventional wisdom has been challenged by the new perception that IS is a reference discipline for others. Evidence supporting this new perception includes: established IS journals, settled academic conferences, distinct subject matter and perspectives in IS research, an established international society, other well-developed networking channels [2], and usage and recognition of the value of IS research [1].

In addition, IS researchers maintain that IS pervades diverse areas and has much to offer researchers in other disciplines [2]. This claim is supported by two well-known IS articles [5, 10] frequently cited by numerous publications in many disciplines. Unfortunately, no published literature has examined knowledge con-

tributions of IS research to other disciplines. Thus, to provide more objective evidence in support of this new perception, we conducted research using citation analysis to examine how frequently the articles published in major IS journals are cited by publications in other disciplines.

Although citation analysis is not new in business research, most past research might better be termed "reference analysis" since the unit of analysis was the references in, rather than the citations of, an article [3]. Examining the references provided in a journal is useful for identifying what disciplines influence that journal, but not for identifying that journal's contributions to other disciplines. Who we reference indicates where our knowledge base comes from [9]; conversely, where our research is cited provides insights into its contributions. Therefore, this study employs citation analysis to examine the citations made to the articles published in major IS journals to assess knowledge contributions of the IS discipline.

Six major IS journals: *Communications of the ACM (CACM)*, *European Journal of Information Systems (EJIS)*, *Information Systems*

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