
Professionals and their Work in the Digital Era

Editors:	David Brock Ben-Gurion University	Kevin Leicht University of Illinois	Daniel Muzio University of York
----------	---	---	---

Professionals and professional organizations are often uncertain as to whether digital technologies are more of a threat than an opportunity. On the one hand, the realm of professional services is characterized by tradition, caution, and institutionalization—providing assurance and stability to commerce and society in general (Brint, 1994; Empson, et al., 2015). On the other hand, we are living in an era of rapid change, especially in the realm of technology—where professionals are caught between the need to keep up with changes and the incentive to actually lead and benefit from change and innovation (Cromwell & Gardner, 2020; Reihlen & Werr, 2012; Semadeni & Anderson, 2010). Professional workers may be trained and certified in time-honored practices and immersed in traditional techniques, but contemporary economic reality often places a premium on adaptation, flexibility, internationalization, change, and innovation (Amara, et al., 2009; Boussebaa & Morgan, 2015; Hinings, et al., 2018).

Researchers have tried, over the past generation, to reconcile these divergent forces within the professional ecosystem. For example, Hinings, et al. (2018) helped us understand the effects of digital innovations on organizations and fields; Amara, et al. (2009) elucidate dynamic aspects of knowledge-intensive service provision; Haas, et al. (2015) shed light on knowledge and attention in the digital economy; and Ollier-Malaterre, et al. (2013) explore online social networks among professionals.

This Special Issue of *JPO* has thus been designed to promote cutting-edge research in this vein, with a focus on professionals coping with contemporary IT/digital advances. Apart from researchers in professional service firms, this SI is intended also to capture the attention of the expanding number of researchers interested in health care, consulting, public management, and other professionalized and professionalizing contexts; as well as other researchers specifically interested in information technology, artificial intelligence and digitalization in contemporary organizational settings.

Specific topics of interest to this SI include but are not limited to...

- Digital developments leading to professional organizational change; e.g. all Big 4 firms incorporated 'AI audit', which evolved into the 'Audit transformation' unit, internalizing Digital and changing career models etc. (Armour & Sako, 2020; Kronblad, C. 2020).
- Professional firm internationalization in a Digital World: How digitalization affects the internationalization of PSFs (Boussebaa, M., & Morgan, G. 2015).
- Digital capabilities enhancing professionals' entrepreneurship (e.g. more and more lawyers joining Digital entrepreneurs (Lawtech), the phenomenon which were so rare before 2010s).
- Digital advances causing institutional change (e.g. IFAC has been discussing new Audit standards for Digital, or Big 4 firms established a shared service center with a unified digital platform).
- How professionals theorize and implement institutional change in the age of artificial intelligence.
- Professional identity work in the online gig economy: the emergence of identity threats and coping tactics professionals may use.
- Social Media and Professional Careers: rapid technological and social advances precipitating changes in work practices and career patterns found among professional organizations (Mawdsley & Somaya, 2016).
- The role of digital media in spreading misinformation and distrust of experts. Is the spread of misinformation, and the distrust of elites that ensues, affecting professional practice, beyond simply questioning whether professionals deserve the privileges societies have granted them? What professional groups are most exposed to the misinformation tsunami?

- Working from home: Whose work is most disrupted or changed, including those for whom places them in direct conflict with their domestic duties/priorities. Are professionals working more hours or less? What are managers and supervisors expecting? Is the digital invasion of work into the home environment producing new sorts of inequalities among professionals?
- Re-professionalization through digitalization: As processes become embedded in digital systems, professional knowledge may become less valuable.

Submissions:	at https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jpo	Final deadline: June 30, 2021
For enquiries about potential submissions, feel free to contact the editors: David Brock (dmb@bgu.ac.il), Kevin Leicht (kleicht@illinois.edu) and Daniel Muzio (daniel.muzio@york.ac.uk).		

References:

- Amara, N., Landry, R., & Doloreux, D. (2009), Patterns of Innovation in Knowledge-Intensive Business Services. *Service Industries Journal*, 29/4: 407-30.
- Armour, J. & Sako, M. (2020). AI-enabled business models in legal services: From traditional law firms to next-generation law companies? *Journal of Professions and Organization*, 7(1): 27-46, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpo/joaa001>
- Boussebaa, M., & Morgan, G. 2015. Internationalization of Professional Service Firms. In L. Empson, D. Muzio, J. Broschak, & B. Hinings (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Professional Service Firms*: 71–91. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Brint, S. (1994). *In the age of experts: The changing role of professionals in politics and public life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cromwell, J. R. & Gardner, H. K. (2020). High-stakes innovation: When collaboration in teams enhances (or undermines) innovation in professional service firms, *Journal of Professions and Organization*, 7(1): 2-26, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpo/joz017>
- Empson, L., D. Muzio, J. Broschak, & B. Hinings (2015), *Oxford Handbook of Professional Service Firms*: 71–91. Oxford, UK: OUP.
- Greenwood, R., Suddaby, R., & Hinings, C. R. 2002. Theorizing change: The role of professional associations in the transformation of institutionalized fields. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45:58-80.
- Haas M. R, Criscuolo, P., & George, G. 2015. Which problems to solve? Online knowledge sharing and attention allocation in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal* 58(3): 680-711.
- Hinings, B., Gegenhuber, T., & Greenwood, R. 2018. Digital innovation and transformation: An institutional perspective. *Information and Organization*, 28: 52-61.
- Kronblad, C. 2020. How digitalization changes our understanding of professional service firms. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 6(3).
- Mawdsley, J. K., & Somaya, D. 2016. Employee mobility and organizational outcomes: An integrative conceptual framework and research agenda. *Journal of Management* 42(1): 85-113.
- Ollier-Malaterre, A., Rothbard, N. P., & Berg, J. M. 2013. When worlds collide in cyberspace: How boundary work in online social networks impacts professional relationships. *Academy of Management Review* 38(4): 645-669.
- Reihlen, M., & Werr, A. 2012. Handbook of research on entrepreneurship in professional services: *Edward Elgar Publishing*.
- Semadeni, M., & Anderson, B. S. 2010. The follower's dilemma: Innovation and imitation in the professional services industry. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(5): 1175-119

Quick facts about *Journal of Professions and Organization*

- ✓ JPO is ranked A by the ABDC journal quality list.
- ✓ A 2019 [CiteScore](#) of 3.6
- ✓ Ranked in the 2 category by the [Academic Journal Guide](#).
- ✓ See list of JPO “Articles with Impact” <https://academic.oup.com/jpo/pages/articles-with-impact>
- ✓ JPO is the home for your research -- see <https://academic.oup.com/jpo/pages/why-submit>
- ✓ Constructive, and fast review process (average time to first letter 26 days; 40 days excluding desk decisions).

3.6 CiteScore²⁰¹⁹
80th percentile
Powered by Scopus

For more information about *Journal of Professions and Organization* see <https://academic.oup.com/jpo/>