

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A

Special Issue of *R&D Management*

Phygital Transformation: Components, Challenges and Prospects

Guest Editors:

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Deadline for paper submissions: **31st July 2022**

Submission window: **1st June - 31st July 2022**

Background

The term *phygital* (synaeresis between the words “physical” and “digital”) was coined in 2007 by Chris Weil, currently Chairman-CEO at Momentum Worldwide, an international practice in the fields of consulting, strategy, analytics, and experience design, to describe the inseparable connections between the physical and the digital worlds (Vergine et al., 2019). Recently, authoritative scholarly journals have devoted attention to uncover the theoretical foundations and the managerial applications of phygital (Batat, 2020).

The “phygital turn” spreads out from the emergence and flourishing of constructs, models and practices that are posited at the critical junction between physical and digital experiences. Actually, research on digital transformation (Cennamo, Dagnino, Di Minin & Lanzolla, 2020) and digital platforms (Cennamo, 2021) has originated notions such as “digital dynamic capability” (Shen, Zhang & Liu, 2021), which affects deeply a firm’s digital transformation performance, “digital knowledge absorption and integration” (Ruiz, Brion & Parmentier, 2020), which can be enhanced, respectively, by the possession of prior knowledge and the accumulation of past experience with a partner, “digital platform-based business models” (Rohn, Bican, Brem, Kraus, & Clauss, 2021), which show how economic value and growth can be generated within the digital platforms interactive ecosystem, and “ecology of platforms” (Hilbolling, Berends, Deken & Tuertscher, 2020), which eventually features the complex interconnections across digital platforms and products. Notwithstanding that, while the digital transformation body of inquiry has recently generated at least one systematic literature review (Hanelt, Bohnsack, Marz & Antunes Marante, 2021), its phygital counterpart has hitherto fallen short to comparatively exhibit such a comprehensive undertaking since it navigates the rough seas of a much earlier stage of its development lifecycle.

The growing attention of practitioners toward the phygital realm is revealed by the increasing number of practitioners’ oriented articles, reports and business-related websites which claim that 2022 is going to be the year of phygital (Bertoletti, 2020; Forrester, 2020). Further, in the last

couple of years the necessity of gaining a more refined understanding of hybridized physical-digital experiences has been undoubtedly enhanced and accelerated by the dramatic exogenous shock presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, by challenging our traditional understanding of organizations' behavior (Soluk, Kammerlander & De Massis, 2021), the pandemic has undoubtedly contributed to radically changing the way we think and behave as human beings, citizens and consumers in shopping, traveling, dining, participating in events and so on (Boeing & Wang, 2021). The Coronavirus has actually made technology and the processes tied to rapid technology adoption an ever increasingly significant interface intersecting people and spaces, thereby enabling them to have safer and more engaging experiences (Martin & Felix, 2020).

Questions

Given these compelling circumstances, we are in need of a more refined understanding of the contours of the components, current challenges and prospects of present-day phygital transformation. Therefore we ask:

- What are challenges and opportunities given by the phygital transformation?
- What are emergent features of phygital firms, industries, ecosystems and platforms?
- What are the emerging principles and practices of the phygital transformation at the various levels (firms, industries, ecosystems and platforms?)?
- How can we measure the phygital transformation impact of firms, organizations and industries?
- And across industries, ecosystems, and platforms?
- What are the key features and structure of phygital business models?
- What are the distinctive characteristics and challenges of phygital capabilities?

Themes

On the ground of this intriguing background on the rising phygital world, this special issue of *R&D Management* on “Phygital Transformation” calls for gathering original research and academic papers which potentially offer a sound contribution to the growing debate on the components, challenges and prospects of the “phygital turn” in management studies and practice. We encourage submissions of papers, using both qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods and conceptual approaches, aiming to contribute to a range of topics such as (but not necessarily limited to):

- the strategic management of the phygital-oriented firm;
- the interplay between strategic and tactical features of phygital transformation;
- the technological challenges and innovations required by the phygital transformation;
- the entrepreneurial aspects of phygital transformation;
- the economics, managerial and organizational features of phygital start-ups and scale-ups;
- measurements issues in phygital transformation;
- features and evolutions of phygital business models;
- the cultural transformation firms, industries, platforms and ecosystems need to design and implement encompassing phygital projects;
- the phygital features of tied to the process of firm internationalization and firm entry in

new international markets;

- the innovative features, challenges and prospects of the so-called omnichannel revolution in retail and distribution.

Note

Papers are expected to be original, unpublished, and not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Before submitting manuscripts, authors are advised to ensure that they have conformed fully to the requirements contained in the instructions to authors that can be found on the journal homepage. Manuscripts which are incorrectly formatted or do not contain all the required elements may be returned to authors for correction prior to review.

Prospective contributors are invited to informally discuss their proposed paper with the Guest Editors prior to submission.

Marketing and Author Engagement Activities

Though the special issue is open to submissions on the key theme potentially coming from anywhere and anybody, submissions to this special issue may benefit from the development of the papers presented and discussed in the two academic venues on the key topic that follow:

- a) the Fourth Digital Transformation Conference, entitled “Phygital Transformation: Constituents, Challenges and Prospects”, organized by Carmelo Cennamo, Giovanni Battista Dagnino, Stefano De Nicolai, Alberto Di Minin, and Costanza Nosi, and held at the University of Rome LUMSA: Rome, 10-11th February 2022. This conference was jointly sponsored by the Italian Academy of Economia Aziendale, Italian Society of Management and Italian Society of Marketing and has attracted 15 good-quality submissions on the relevant topic;
- b) the Seventh International Conference on New Business Models, Track on “Phygital Business Models and Sustainability: Present Challenges and Future Directions”, organized by Francesca Cabiddu, Giovanni Battista Dagnino and Ludovica Moi, University of Rome LUMSA: Rome 22-24th June 2022 (paper submissions deadline: 16th February 2022).

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NOTE: Carmelo Cennamo, G.B. Dagnino and Alberto Di Minin have served as guest editors of the *California Management Review* Special Issue “Managing Digital Transformation”, Vol.62, N.4, 2020.