

# MIS Doctoral Dissertations: 1996–1997

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This is the 16th year that the *MIS Quarterly* has published a listing of MIS dissertations to provide an updated source index to the MIS dissertation literature. Abstracts of most of the dissertations will be found in Dissertation Abstracts, available in most university libraries and accessed through CD-ROM and online access search procedures. Dissertation abstract identification numbers are provided in the listing if available to us. The 500 to 1,000 word abstracts provide a short description of the research topic, methodology, and findings. Complete dissertations are available through University Microfilms.

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Until 1994, the process of locating dissertations considered to be MIS depended on a keyword search of dissertation titles in Dissertation Abstracts. This process was previously described and validated.<sup>1</sup> In 1995, all

North American faculty were directly contacted by e-mail to identify MIS dissertations. This year, the search process included all faculty in our international databases. Messages were broadcast through ISWorld and specialized list servers. The request was for dissertations in English. We have accepted some dissertations where the titles are in English even though the dissertations are not.

We continue to search Dissertation Abstracts in addition to eliciting contributions directly from MIS faculty. A combination of search and eliciting processes are required. A search of Dissertation Abstracts may not find some dissertations because the titles do not contain key words used in the search, some schools are not included, many non-U.S. universities are not included, and there are often substantial delays in publication of abstracts. As always, individuals who find their dissertations are not listed may submit the title for inclusion in the next year's list to:

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Until 1995, the cutoff dates for dissertations to be included were not consistently handled. This year, the announced period was July 1996 through June 1997. This fits the way dissertations are reported in *Dissertation Abstracts*. Dissertations missed in past listings are included without regard to the date.

The list this year includes 108 dissertations. There are 32 dissertations from universities outside the U.S.A. and Canada (Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom)

<sup>1</sup>Hamilton, S., Ives, B., and Davis, G. B. "MIS Doctoral Dissertations: 1973-1980," *MIS Quarterly* (5:2), June 1981, pp. 61-83.

This data suggests the production of MIS doctorates in the United States and Canada is currently between 100 to 120 per year, taking into account dissertations missing from the list and possible misclassifications. It is not possible to estimate the number of dissertations outside the United States and Canada because the listing is incomplete.

One of the difficulties in preparing the list of dissertations has been to draw the boundary between MIS dissertations and dissertations that use the domain of MIS but are essentially outside the field. The general rules for inclusion are:

1. Dissertations in an established MIS program. The rule is based on the idea that MIS dissertations reflect what MIS programs and graduates taking MIS positions are doing.
2. Dissertations in programs that are not clearly defined as MIS but some of their students are considered MIS and take MIS positions. Inclusion is based on the topic of the dissertation.
3. Dissertations outside MIS groups that match the domain of MIS. They would be considered good MIS research if done within an MIS group. The reason for including them is because of the absence of MIS programs in some universities and because they are of interest to the MIS research community.

Generally excluded are dissertations that are primarily computer science, decision sciences, or artificial intelligence. Also excluded are applications of MIS in areas such as education, health care, etc. where the emphasis is on the application domain rather than MIS.

The listings in the *MIS Quarterly* began in 1981 with a list spanning the years 1973-1980. Yearly lists have been published thereafter. The list of dissertations from 1973 through June 1997 is available through the *MIS Discovery* website.

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