Brainstorming Discussion: Taxonomy of Business Process Flexibility

Moderator: Pnina Soffer

The theme of this workshop is “Business processes and support systems: design for flexibility”. Devoting a workshop to this issue implies that flexibility is attracting an increasing amount of attention and is becoming a new guiding principle in the design of business processes and BPS systems. However, the term flexibility with respect to business processes and BPS systems bears a rather vague meaning, and is used by different people for expressing different concepts.

The development of BP taxonomies is aimed at addressing this difficulty and taking a step towards the establishment of a common understanding of the flexibility concept. Such understanding is expected to be gained by decomposing the broad flexibility issue into specific classes and types, identifying relevant aspects and characteristics for such a classification.

The motivation for doing this is the expectation that by properly understanding what flexibility is, insights will be gained as to how it can be achieved. Such insights may concern methodologies, techniques, and organization and system specific requirements. Hence, constructing taxonomies is a way of realizing concrete and practical tasks from the abstract title of flexibility.

The brainstorming discussion will be held right after a presentation session devoted to BP taxonomy-related papers. Following these presentations, the discussion will aim at synthesizing and consolidating the ideas that will be raised into a meaningful and useful taxonomy of BP and BPS flexibility, or suggesting guidelines for the development of such taxonomies.