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JULY
2026

IFKAD 2026

21st International Forum on Knowedge Asset Dynamics

Corvinius University of Budapest, Hungary

Intelligent Knowledge For Sustainable Organizations

CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS - IFKAD 2026
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Special Track n.: 16

Organizational Change, Culture, and Emerging Technologies: Rethinking Knowledge for Sustainable Organizations

Description

Every organizational transformation begins with tension — between what an organization is and what it aspires to become. Organizational change management represents a systemic and intentional process aimed at reconfiguring structures, competencies, technologies, and culture to enhance adaptability and effectiveness (Burnes, 2004). Yet, as Castel and Friedberg (2010) emphasize, change is rarely linear. It is a dialectical phenomenon, where innovation and established routines interact, producing dynamic equilibria between continuity and disruption. Within this complexity, organizational culture emerges as the invisible infrastructure of change — a shared system of meanings, values, and symbols that shapes how people interpret, accept, and reframe transformation (Schein, 2010; Alvesson & Lindkvist, 1993) and a critical factor that builds and reinforces how organizational members learn, acquire, and share knowledge (Rai, 2011). In the knowledge management process, individual actions often conflict with the organizational culture, which is shaped by shared assumptions and deep-rooted values developed through participation and experience (Chang and Lin, 2015).In contemporary organizations, marked by technological complexity and hybrid or virtual work environments, change extends beyond structural or procedural redesign. It also involves transforming the ways in which technology becomes embedded in the cultural fabric of everyday work influencing how knowledge circulates and how meaning is collectively constructed. Recent studies show that emergent digital technologies are not neutral tools, but carriers of particular logics and values that reshape communication, collaboration, and control (Orlikowski, 2007; Leonardi, 2011). The introduction of collaborative platforms, artificial intelligence, and data analytics therefore requires a deep cultural transition, enabling people to learn new organizational languages, critically interpret data, and reconstruct trust within digital relationships (Baumgartner et al., 2021; Berente et al., 2021).

In this context, the notion of hybrid intelligence exemplifies the convergence between knowledge management and emerging technologies — a socio-technical process in which human and artificial cognition interact to co-create knowledge, enhance learning, and support organizational sensemaking (Sherson et al., 2025). This perspective underscores that technological transformation is sustainable only when accompanied by cultural evolution, shared meanings, and a collective capacity for reflection and experimentation.

From this perspective, technology should not be seen merely as a driver of change but as a cultural actor that interacts with organizational practices,systems of meaning and processes of knowledge creation. Hybrid intelligence thus highlights how the integration of human insight and machine capability can foster adaptive learning and innovation within organizational cultures. Digital adoption becomes sustainable only when embedded within a culture that values learning, experimentation, and reflexivity, turning technological innovation into organizational innovation (Vuchkovski et al., 2023). Consequently, in organizations, change management must be understood as a process of collective sensemaking (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), in which people jointly negotiate what "makes sense" in a hybrid, digital, and uncertain world.

The literature on organizational change offers many frameworks to understand these dynamics — from Lewin's (1947) foundational unfreezing–change–refreezing model to systemic approaches emphasizing congruence and alignment (Nadler & Tushman, 1980; Kotter, 1996). What unites the most effective models is their focus on culture and leadership. Transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1993) does not impose change but creates conditions for people

to co-create it, generating trust, meaning, and shared purpose. As Schein (2010) and Xenikou (2019) suggest, leaders shape culture through what they emphasize, reward, and communicate — while culture, in turn, influences how leaders perceive and enact change.
Cultural resistance should not be viewed merely as an obstacle but as a manifestation of identity tension — a potential resource for collective learning and renewal (Huy, 2002; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Resilient organizations are not those that eliminate resistance but those that transform it into dialogue and reflection. In this sense, culture is not static but a strategic knowledge asset — a living, evolving system of shared meanings that enables organizations to interpret uncertainty, mobilize commitment, and build sustainable advantage.
In the digital age, change processes are amplified by the rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence, predictive systems, and virtual collaboration. These developments demand a cultural reconfiguration of concepts such as autonomy, control, ethics, and trust (Berente et al., 2021; Orlikowski & Scott, 2016). Research on the digital workplace (Baumgartner et al., 2021) and virtual trust (Newman & Ford, 2021) demonstrates that culture can be both an enabler and a barrier: control-oriented cultures tend to slow digital adoption, whereas learning-oriented and empowering cultures promote continuous innovation and organizational sustainability. Hybrid intelligence further invites reflection on how human expertise and algorithmic systems co-evolve, redefining the boundaries of knowledge, decision-making, and creative collaboration.

In this track, we especially encourage contributions that problematize and reimagine the interplay among organizational change, culture, and emerging technologies, viewing them also through the lens of knowledge creation, sharing, and renewal, considering questions such as:

- How do organizational cultures enable or constrain transformation processes, particularly in contexts of digitalization, sustainability, and systemic uncertainty, and how do these cultural dynamics shape collective knowledge processes?
- To what extent do emerging technologies (e.g., AI, data analytics, collaborative platforms, forms of hybrid intelligence) transform the meaning of work, learning, and collaboration within organizations?
- How are organizational processes—including decision-making, coordination, and communication—reconfigured during digital and cultural transformation, and what forms of knowledge emerge, circulate, or disappear in these transitions?
- What cultural and technological mechanisms sustain or disrupt knowledge flows across organizational boundaries?
- How do emerging technologies reshape organizational identities and redefine who holds, accesses, and legitimizes knowledge, and how do cultural frames mediate these dynamics?
- What does it mean to "be a user" in organizations where algorithms, data, and automation increasingly mediate human action and sensemaking?
- How can transformational leadership and strategic communication build shared meaning, trust, and engagement throughout change processes?
- In what ways can organizations build cultural and dynamic capabilities that integrate knowledge creation into everyday practices that sustain process redesign and continuous learning over time?
- What multi-level dynamics—individual, group, organizational, and institutional—shape the co-evolution of culture, technology, and process change?

We invite theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions that advance our understanding of these dynamics through qualitative, quantitative, mixed, or interdisciplinary approaches. Comparative, longitudinal, and cross-sectoral analyses are also encouraged.

Keywords

Organizational change; Organizational culture; Emerging technologies; Leadership; Sustainable organization; Knowledge creation

Organizers

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Guidelines and Requirements

Researchers wishing to contribute are invited to submit an EXTENDED ABSTRACT (in doc/docx format) of min 500 and max 1000 words, not later than **31 JANUARY 2026**. All submission must be done via dedicated form on our website.
The abstract should address theoretical background, research objective, methodology, and results in terms of expected contribution to Knowledge Management theory and practice.
Authors are required to follow the guidelines and templates available on IFKAD website: www.ifkad.org

Important Dates

31 January 2026 – Extended Abstract Submission Deadline
24 February 2026 – Acceptance Notification to Authors
20 April 2026 – Early-Bird Registration & Payment Deadline
02 May 2026 – Full Paper Submission Deadline
31 May 2026 – Regular and PhD Students Registration & Payment Deadline
15 June 2026 – Conference Program Release
1-3 July 2026 – Conference sessions *(to be considered as 3 full working days)*

Please note that all above indicated dates are CUT-OFF deadlines. There will not be an extention to any of these.

Further Information

For any information related to the conference and/or any special track, please see the event website at www.ifkad.org or contact the conference manager at **info@ifkad.org**