

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20040]

Proposed title of the session

Post, Telegraph & Telephone: Diverse Developments yet Global Connections

Abstract

The development of modern economies during the Industrial revolution as well as the emergence of modern bureaucracies and organizational forms during a similar time frame heavily relied on the exchange of information between different locations. This need was met by the emergence of modern communication and information exchange systems like universal postal service, telegraph and telephone, during the 19th century. Although the development of these systems is strongly linked to technological innovations during this time in many cases their economic, administrative and organization characteristics were developed out of pre-existing structures instituted in pre-industrial societies.

The technologies that underlay the revolutionary changes through these different communications methods were extremely similar between different countries, yet the adoption, diffusion and impact of these new information systems shows substantial international differences. Similarly technological cooperation and international organizations created global communications networks facilitating a wave of globalization, yet domestic institutional arrangements differed widely between participating countries.

The aim of this panel is twofold. First we intend to explore the specific paths and impact of these services in individual countries, creating the basis for comparative analyses of the role of information services in the development of modern economies and states. This focus on domestic development within countries is complemented by the second aim of the panel. The emergence of global communication networks linked up domestic systems and played an important role in the first wave of globalization. The panel aims to explore the creation of these networks and their interaction with other global structures like trade, migration and capital flows as well as their impact on domestic structures.

Due to the global nature of these services the session intends to include papers about multiple geographical regions with papers taking a comparative approach especially welcome. This is complemented by papers taking an international or global perspective. Although the intended time period is the long 19th century between the industrial revolution and World War I, studies from other areas might be considered as well if they fit the theme.

Thematically papers can address the issue from various angles. Possibilities are investigations into the factors shaping the institutional, structural and operational characteristics of communication sectors as well as the impact the Post, Telegraph and Telephone had on the economy, institutions, firms and households. A particular topic is the role of the state and government, not only for their role in the domestic development of communication systems, but also with regard to international cooperation and coordination.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Dr. Florian Ploeckl (University of Adelaide [Australia])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
-

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Markus Lampe (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid [Spain])
3. Janet Hunter (London School of Economics [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
4. Diane Deblois (Editor "Postal History Journal" [United States of America])
5. Tom Velk (McGill University [Canada])
6. Mark Crowley (Wuhan University [Afghanistan])