

Nevenka Žarkić Joksimović, Sanja Marinković  
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia

## SYMORG 2018 “Doing Business in the Digital Age: Challenges, Approaches and Solutions”- Conference review

The International Symposium SymOrg of the Faculty of Organizational Sciences was founded in 1989. Since then, the Faculty of Organizational Sciences has traditionally organized the SymOrg biannually with the aim of improving the theory and the practice of management and management-related disciplines. The Symposium brings together members of national and international academic and research communities, representatives of corporate, public and non-governmental sectors, and undergraduate, graduate and PhD students who participate in discussions and analyses of relevant issues by presenting their current results, knowledge and experiences.

The main topic of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Symposium was “Doing Business in the Digital Age: Challenges, Approaches and Solutions”. The aim of the Symposium was to offer answers to a myriad of problems arising from new business models created by blurring the digital and physical worlds. As new disruptive technologies and ever-changing needs of important business stakeholders reshape the world of business, digital transformation becomes almost a necessity. The ambition of organizers was to create new visions and catalyze this transformation. The program of the Symposium included lectures from keynote speakers, interactive discussions in working sessions, presentations, panels, as well as eventful entertainment time including social gatherings, excursions and sports activities.

The opening ceremony of the Symposium was held in the Ratko Mitrović Congress Center, attended by than 200 participants, professors and students from Serbia and abroad. Professor Ana Milićević Langović, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, wished the participants a successful conference. Professor Milija Suknović, the Dean of the Faculty of Organizational Sciences (FOS), addressed the audience by saying that “this is the 16<sup>th</sup> time that professors and students gather to share their experiences, good practices, knowledge and to establish contacts, which implies that the Symposium proved its significance.” Professor Ivanka Popović, the Vice-Rector of the University of Belgrade, said that the FOS is one of the 31 faculties of the University of Belgrade, that the conference is a valuable opportunity for creating good labour market professionals, and for learning how to create an ideal working environment with the use of digital technology. “New time is looking for new educational models and new ways of communication. The Internet and social networks are rapidly progressing and it is a fact that some services have become truly addictive. This represents a major challenge both from the psychological and social points of view. These phenomena and changes are looking for new approaches and new solutions”- said Professor Nevenka Žarkić Joksimović, the President of the SymOrg 2018 Program Committee. Professor Sanja Marinković, the Vice-Dean for international cooperation and the President of Symorg 2018 Organizing Committee, emphasized that the conference was always very useful for doing future business and for this reason it continued to put students in focus.

The participants had the opportunity to attend the lectures of three keynote speakers: Branislav Vujović, the President of the New Frontier Group, Austria, said that we need to know how to create new values, because this is the basic issue of digitization. Business in the digital era is changing rapidly and we need to know how to share information in such a way as to keep the client in the spotlight. Professor TAN, So Jiuan, Nus Business School Singapore, represented Singapore as a multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural country and reminded the audience of the importance of developing IT skills for both an individual and a company. Professor Katri Kerem, Estonia Business School, Estonia, spoke about digitization in Estonia, with a special focus on Estonian digitized health-care system and the application of digitization in the field of genetics. Estonia has a strategy for Internet use that encompasses all age groups. She also reminded the audience about the high scores that Estonian pupils earn on the PISA tests (1st in Europe).

The second day of the Symposium hosted three roundtables focusing on digitalization. The moderator of the first roundtable entitled *Current state and future prospects of Serbian digitalization* was Branislav Vujović, New Frontier Group, Austria, while the panelists were Branko Ružić, the Serbian Minister of State Administration and Local Government, Milan Simić, Executive Director of IT and ICT Services at the Telekom Srbija, Mihailo Jovanović, Assistant Professor and Director of IT and e-Government Office and Nenad Paunović, Director of IT and Entrepreneurship Team from the Cabinet of the Prime Minister. Important issues regarding digital economy and the changes that it brings to clients, companies, administrations, and the society as a whole were discussed during this roundtable. The focus was on the values brought about by the digital economy, and the ways of recognizing and defining them. The panelists tried to provide answers to the questions concerning Serbian chances and directions regarding digital transformation, the advantages and disadvantages of a faster digitization progress, and other issues. "Digitization is a priority of this Government. New registers are needed in order to introduce digitization, so that citizens and users will be at the centre of attention, and the State is providing citizen services" - said Minister Ružić.

Another roundtable entitled *When E-procurement did (not) mean better procurement* was moderated by Predrag Jovanović, the Director of the Public Procurement Office in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, while the panelists were Sašo Matas, the head of Division for the development of public procurement systems, Ministry of Administration, Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Miloš Jović, the Head of division for development of public procurement systems, Public procurement office, Serbia, Dean Firkelj, a consultant from Croatia, and Sandra Damijan, Research Center of the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The third roundtable gathered together the former students of the FOS who now occupy leading positions in some of the major companies in Serbia. Mladen Čudanov, Associate Professor opened the topic of *Re-defining knowledge and skills in the digital environment*, and the panelists were some distinguished representatives of the academic community: Professor Ivanka Popović, Vice-Dean of the University of Belgrade, Professor Miladin Kostić, the Dean of University of Novi Pazar, Mihailo Vesović, the councillor of the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and Dušan Vujović, Assistant Professor, the Union University. Also in the roles of panelists were the representatives of the corporate sector: Maša Lalić, Head of Human Resources, Generali Osiguranje, Gorana Golubović Vuksanović, Head of Corporate Communications, MK Group, Suzana Marović, Head of Development Sector, Telekom Srbija, Jovana Dačković, HR Business Partner and Talent Development Expert, Coca Cola Hellenic, and Dragana Stojanović, People Processes Manager, Air Serbia. One of the questions raised referred to formal and informal education. The representatives of the academic community pointed that many University programs wish to maintain their exclusivity and that we have become intolerant to multidisciplinary programmes. This is why it is necessary to redefine them. The representatives of companies, on the other hand, spoke about knowledge and skills that are expected, but hardly ever present in graduates with a degree in IT and management. They all agree that the practical knowledge gained in the course of studies is very important for their future careers.

On the third day of the Symposium, a workshop was dedicated to project activities within Erasmus + FINAC project (*Financial management, Accounting and Controlling curricula development for capacity building of public administration*). After the introductory words of the project coordinator, Professor Slađana Benković, the participants presented the results achieved so far and agreed on future activities with the aim of sharing the experiences of all the participants from the region.

The fourth roundtable, *Blockchain technologies for better business*, was moderated by Miroslav Minović, Associate Professor, and Mladen Đurić, Assistant Professor, both from the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, while the panelists were Radojko Miladinović, PhD, IT Director of the Belgrade Stock Exchange, Matija Stanić, Product Specialist, Societe General Bank and Novica Ninić, Production Manager, IBM Cloud. The roundtable dealt with one of the burning topics – *blockchain technology*, with a special focus on the implementation of this technology in business. The panelists discussed the main advantages and disadvantages of the blockchain technology, and the possible use of private blockchains for the improvement of business operations in various fields, e.g., quality control, banking, fintech, agriculture, health services, etc. The participants had the opportunity to learn more about the functioning of blockchain technologies, and the panelists were eager to answer the many questions of the audience. All the participants agreed that blockchain will soon become an integral part of everyday business, both on its own and in combination with traditional technologies.

This was the first time that SymOrg was hosting a students' case study and programming competition SymOrg Case Study Hackathon 2018, with the support of the Serbian Government, the Swiss Office for Development and Cooperation, the National Alliance for Local Development NALED and the Tax Administration Office of the Republic of Serbia. Six interdisciplinary teams worked on finding their solutions for the improvement of flat-rate taxation and user interface for better communication between Tax Administration and

taxpayers. The teamwork had lasted for 30 hours and was then presented in front of a jury. The “GGWP” team (Kristina Đurić, Tijana Smiljić, Milan Mojsilović, Aleksa Đokić, Nikola Arsić, Nikola Milovanović) won the first prize, while the second went to the “LightIdeas/AMT Consulting” team (Svetlana Tomić, Stevan Radovanović, Nemanja Rašić, Aleksandar Marković, Matija Trifunović and Bogdan Radenković). The third place was won by the “Treće mesto” team (Filip Markovski, Dimitrije Milenković, Marko Rušić, Milan Popović, Andrija Vulićević and Anđelija Đorđević).

During the gala dinner on the last evening of the Symposium, several awards were presented to the most outstanding participants. In the category of the best paper, the award went to Teaching Assistant Nikola Zornic and Associate Professor Aleksandar Marković, for the paper “*Crypto-currency price forecasting using time series and Monte Carlo modelling and simulation*”. The best presenter at the Symposium was Milica Maričić, Teaching Assistant at the Department of Operational Research and Statistics. Ivona Jovanović and Uroš Jeremić were awarded as the best young authors. A special award was presented to Associate Professor Mladen Čudanov, for the best general impression of the Symposium.

The 16<sup>th</sup> International Symposium SymOrg 2018 was closed on June 10, 2018. More than 250 participants took part in the Symposium with as many as 92 scientific papers, presented in 14 sessions. The President of the Program Committee, Nevenka Žarkić Joksimović, and the President of the Organizing Committee, Sanja Marinković, spoke about the results of the Symposium and expressed their gratitude to the participants, partners, companies and institutions that supported the SymOrg 2018.