Spring 3-2025

Synergizing Service Ecosystems with AI

Christian Bartelheimer
Paderborn University, christian.bartelheimer@upb.de

Daniel Heinz
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, daniel.heinz@kit.edu

Sarah Hoenigsberg
ICN Business School, Sarah.hoenigsberg@icn-artem.com

Mahei Manhai Li
University of St.Gallen, University of Kassel, mahei.li@unisg.ch

Gero Strobel
University Duisburg-Essen, gero.strobel@uni-due.de

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SIG SVC Workshop Editorial

Christian Bartelheimer
Paderborn University
Paderborn, Germany
christian.bartelheimer@upb.de

Daniel Heinz
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
Karlsruhe, Germany
daniel.heinz@kit.edu

Sarah Hönigsberg
ICN Business School
La Défense, Paris, France
sarah.honigsberg@icn-artem.com

Mahei Manhai Li
University of St. Gallen
Müller-Friedbergstrasse 8
mahei.li@unisg.ch

Gero Strobel
University of Duisburg-Essen & University of Stuttgart
Essen, Stuttgart, Germany
gero.strobel@uni-due.de

Abstract

This editorial synthesizes insights from the SIG Services workshop on "Synergizing Service Ecosystems with AI" at ICIS 2024, in Bangkok, Thailand, where the participants examined the expanding role of generative AI in service ecosystems. Generative AI leads us to go far beyond traditional data-driven service approaches and allows to actively shape service design, management, and experiences. AI agents enter frontline interactions and backend processes and challenge established notions of human roles, resource orchestration, and organizational strategy. The workshop contributions highlight novel theoretical perspectives, including human-AI co-creation, agency reconfiguration, and the interplay of trust, data governance, and sustainable development in service ecosystems. They also underscore tensions between global standardization and local regulation, as well as the need for interdisciplinary research and responsible innovation frameworks. By integrating generative AI into diverse service domains—public, financial, educational, and industrial—this wave of transformation promises new opportunities and complex dilemmas. Ultimately, this editorial invites other researchers to navigate the emerging landscape ethically, inclusively, and sustainably.

Keywords: Generative AI, Service, Service Ecosystem, Value Co-Creation

Introduction

Service ecosystems—complex, interdependent configurations of actors, technologies, and value-creating processes—have entered a period of profound transformation (Giannakos et al., 2024; Yoo, 2024). Central to this transformation is the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, which now enables the automated production of meaningful, human-like content including text, images,

audio, and beyond. As these capabilities move from the periphery of experimentation into the mainstream of service provision, we find ourselves at an inflection point where generative AI leads to how service design, management, and experience is being reimagined (Hui et al., 2024; Issa et al., 2024).

Generative AI transcends traditional data-driven tasks, pushing the boundaries of what "intelligent" systems can achieve (Alavi et al., 2024). Early applications focused on analytics and decision support; today, generative models actively create and shape new service experiences by influencing the nature, form, and quality of the offerings customers engage with (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Weritz et al., 2024; Banh & Strobel, 2024). This shift from passive analysis to active co-creation—where humans and AI can jointly compose the customer journey—revisits fundamental assumptions about value co-creation, roles of service employees, resource orchestration, and even the ontological status of AI agents in the service landscape (Grewal et al., 2024). Within our workshop, we aimed to study how these different perspectives engage with the service ecosystem.

At the 2024 SIG Services workshop held during the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS), leading scholars, practitioners, and innovators came together to explore the interplay between service ecosystems and generative AI. Reflecting on the disruptive potential of generative AI, the workshop discussions highlighted how content creation capabilities impact both frontline service interactions and backend processes. On the frontlines, generative AI can serve as an adaptive, responsive co-worker, assisting human employees in delivering more personalized, context-aware interactions (Culotta & Mattei, 2024; Wilson & Daugherty, 2024). In the backend, it can revolutionize how services are conceptualized, prototyped, and improved, prompting enterprises to rethink their strategies for data governance, human-AI collaboration, and sustainable value creation (Nah et al., 2023; Laine et al., 2025). With generative AI, we see that backend activities are increasingly affecting frontline services, which raises questions on how these new services interact with their service ecosystems and how service management deals with new service orchestration mechanisms.

Crucially, generative AI also enables new ways of theorizing the concept of agency within service (e.g., Holmström 2024; Lopez Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2024). As AI-driven agents assume roles traditionally reserved for human employees—suggesting options, making recommendations, managing routine tasks, and even conducting creative tasks—questions arise: How do these agentic capabilities influence customer trust and satisfaction? What new managerial, ethical, and regulatory challenges emerge when AI systems contribute to strategic decision-making or reshape the boundaries of organizational identity? As illustrated by examples in emerging and established markets alike, the integration of generative AI does not just change how services are delivered; it reconfigures the foundational constructs of service ecosystems (Giannakos et al., 2024; Sabherwal & Grover, 2024) and blurs the distinction between operand and operant resources.

In this editorial, we build upon the insights and discussions from the SIG SVC Workshop to chart a path forward. We first lay out a service ecosystem perspective on generative AI, situating the technology's burgeoning capabilities within a larger theoretical and practical context. We then synthesize contributions from the workshop's presentations—ranging from the orchestration of AI agents in multi-actor ecosystems to the dynamics of human-AI collaboration, the consequences for service design and innovation, and the ethical and global considerations shaping the field. Collectively, these studies invite scholars to embrace multidisciplinary approaches, blending information systems with organizational theory, human-computer interaction, management disciplines, and beyond. They also underscore the urgent need for more nuanced research on sustainable AI-enabled services, novel governance structures, and responsive regulatory frameworks that accommodate both global and local contingencies.

This editorial aims to bring together emerging discourses on generative AI and service, offering a synthesized lens through which the academic and practitioner communities can understand and manage this transformative wave. We hope that by engaging with these perspectives and insights, researchers and industry leaders alike will find inspiration for designing, implementing, and managing AI-enabled services that not only enhance performance and efficiency but also advance digital responsibility, societal well-being, and the sustainable evolution of service ecosystems.

A Service Ecosystem Perspective on Generative AI

Service ecosystems are inherently dynamic configurations of actors, resources, and institutional arrangements that coalesce to create, exchange, and integrate value (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). In such ecosystems, the value of services emerges from complex and evolving relationships rather than from isolated transactions (Hönigsberg & Dinter, 2024). Generative AI enters this landscape as an active participant and a transformative catalyst. Unlike earlier forms of AI, which often focused on narrow classification, prediction, or optimization tasks, generative AI actively produces new forms of value-creating resources—be they textual recommendations, visual designs, synthesized audio, or algorithmically generated user interfaces (e.g., Boussioux et al., 2024). By doing so, it not only supports service delivery but also reshapes underlying value co-creation processes.

From a service ecosystem perspective, generative AI should not be viewed merely as a tool deployed at the periphery of service processes (Vargo et al., 2024). Rather, it represents a new category of agency-infused entities capable of interacting with and shaping other actors and resources in the ecosystem. This coincides with the resources taking on the role of either operant or operand resources, which can now dynamically shift by actions due to system agency in addition to human agency: As AI agents mimic, extend, or complement human roles, they challenge the once-clear boundaries between human and machine. This blurring of lines encourages us to revisit foundational assumptions in service theory: What does it mean to be an actor in a service ecosystem? How do we conceptualize the "resources" that an AI agent brings to the table when it can generate, transform, and recombine content at scale? And what new forms of relationship-building and coordination emerge when AI-driven agents collaborate or even negotiate with other ecosystem participants?

A service ecosystem perspective thus compels a systemic understanding of the changes generative AI introduces. For instance, by seamlessly integrating AI-generated outputs into frontline and backend processes, organizations can reconfigure their service offerings in near-real time. AI-driven conversational agents can engage with customers as service employees once did (Maurya et al., 2024), continuously adapting dialogue, content, and recommendations based on evolving contextual cues. These agents, in turn, rely on data flows, computational infrastructures, and institutional logics that support their existence. The resulting dynamic configuration allows for ad hoc shaping and reconfigurations of service building blocks—human professionals, AI-driven systems, and organizational processes—into novel value propositions.

In this evolving tapestry, multiple challenges arise. The delegation of certain tasks to AI agents puts pressure on humans, as service employees grapple with new skill requirements, such as overseeing AI outputs, refining generative models, or managing exceptions that AI cannot handle independently or might systematically overlook. Similarly, managers and policymakers must develop new governance frameworks to ensure data quality, ethical standards, and fair access to these emerging AI capabilities. The institution of trust—once understood as a primarily human-mediated phenomenon—now finds itself partially vested in autonomous agents whose reliability and "intentions" must be scrutinized (e.g., Korzyński et al., 2024; Lopez Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2024). This requires rethinking sovereignty over services provided and interactions with and between humans during service delivery.

Moreover, the global and local contexts in which service ecosystems operate shape the trajectory of generative AI adoption and governance. Regulatory differences influence what types of AI-generated content can be integrated into services, while cultural nuances affect user perceptions of AI-driven experiences. In some markets, stringent data protection laws will require more transparent and accountable AI deployments; in others, the appetite for rapid innovation may tilt ecosystems toward faster, if riskier, adoption strategies.

A service ecosystem perspective, therefore, pushes generative AI scholarship beyond a mere focus on model sophistication or task efficiency. It draws our attention to the interplay between actors, resources, and institutions as we ask: How does generative AI alter the configuration and logic of value co-creation within service ecosystems? How will human and non-human actors negotiate roles, responsibilities, and authority as these technologies advance? How will agency affect the forming of new and adaption of current institutional logics and arrangements? And what new strategic, operational, and ethical considerations emerge for organizations seeking to harness generative AI's potential while ensuring the long-term viability and fairness of their service ecosystems?

In the following sections, we present an overview of the research showcased at the SIG SVC Workshop. These contributions collectively illustrate the multifaceted ways in which generative AI is reshaping service ecosystems—highlighting opportunities for innovation, reframing the nature of service encounters, and raising important questions about the future of human-AI collaboration, data governance, and societal impact. Together, they offer a roadmap for scholars and practitioners to better understand, design, and manage service ecosystems in an era of generative AI.

Overviews of the Papers Presented at the Workshop

The workshop showcased a broad array of scholarly inquiries into how generative AI reshapes service ecosystems across diverse sectors and use cases. While each study examines unique questions and contexts, we can broadly group the contributions into three overarching themes: (1) Organizational Impact and Ecosystem Adoption, (2) Service Design, Orchestration, and Experience Enhancement, and (3) Data, Governance, and Trust in AI-Enabled Services.

Organizational Impact and Ecosystem Adoption

Several papers examined how generative AI drives changes at the organizational and ecosystem level, exploring issues such as strategic integration, operational improvements, and the evolving roles of human and AI actors.

- *Economic Retrieval-Augmented Generation for Large Language Model Services* by Lowin and Mihale-Wilson addresses the technical and strategic considerations of integrating retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) for SMEs. The work points to economic and operational frameworks that can guide service providers in efficiently harnessing LLM capabilities, thus highlighting the interplay between technical feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and organizational decision-making in AI adoption (Lowin & Mihale-Wilson, 2025).
- *Empowering Regional Bank Sales Through Embodied Conversational Agents: A Multiple Case Study* by Wendt, Schäfer, and Schaarschmidt investigates how regional banks integrate embodied conversational agents (ECAs) to enhance sales efficiency. By bridging gaps in low-value customer segments, AI-driven agentic services complement human efforts and open new avenues for personalized and context-aware financial services (Wendt et al., 2025).
- *GenAI for Sustainable Development: An Inductive Analysis of International Organizations* by Faria and Trocin sheds light on how international entities harness generative AI for sustainability goals. This study posits that generative AI can enhance resource management, data-driven decision-making, and long-term strategic planning, thereby contributing to sustainable development objectives and catalyzing responsible innovation in service ecosystems (Faria & Trocin, 2025).
- *Integrating Generative AI with Public Data Ecosystems: Enhancing Decision-Making and Efficiency in the Public Sector* by Symeonidis and Nikiforova positions generative AI within public data ecosystems. Their conceptual framework suggests that carefully orchestrated AI adoption can deliver more representative, transparent, and inclusive insights for public administration, reinforcing the notion that generative AI can serve public interests when integrated with robust data governance (Symeonidis & Nikiforova, 2025).

Service Design, Orchestration, and Experience Enhancement

Another set of contributions centers on how generative AI shifts the ways we design, orchestrate, and deliver services. These studies emphasize improved user experiences, co-creation practices, and the evolving nature of service encounters.

- *Optimizing Service Experience Design with Generative AI* by Zhao and Zaki looks at how organizations leverage generative AI in the ideation, prototyping, and refining of service experiences. By combining human-centered design thinking with AI-driven creativity, firms can tailor more personalized, efficient, and satisfying service journeys (Zhao & Zhaki, 2025).

- *Service-Embedded Interaction for LLM Assistance* by Skodawessely, Jung, and Zinke-Wehlmann highlights a new wave of interaction design—one in which generative AI agents are deeply integrated into user interfaces. By guiding users contextually and proactively, LLM-based assistants enhance user autonomy, reduce cognitive load, and improve service fluidity (Skodawessely et al., 2025).
- *Let's Play with AI! A 2x2 Experiment on Collaborative vs. Competitive Game Elements for Pedagogical Conversational Agents* by Khosrawi-Rad, Grogorick, Janson, Keller, Benner, and Robra-Bissantz explores how gamified pedagogical conversational agents—powered by generative AI—can foster motivation, collaboration, and learning outcomes. Their findings suggest that co-creative and social elements in AI-driven educational services promote richer group interactions and user engagement, offering insights into designing more meaningful learner-centric ecosystems (Khosrawi-Rad et al. 2025).

Data, Governance, and Trust in AI-Enabled Services

The third thematic category addresses the foundational enablers and constraints of AI-driven service ecosystems: data quality, trustworthiness, transparency, and the governance mechanisms that ensure responsible and sustainable innovation.

- *Synthetic Data Generation for Predictive Maintenance Services* by Mihale-Wilson, Cordes, and Lowin exemplifies how generative AI can fill data gaps to facilitate predictive maintenance. By creating synthetic datasets where real data is scarce, this approach enables more robust training of AI models, ultimately boosting the reliability, efficiency, and transferability of data-intensive service innovations (Mihale-Wilson et al., 2025).
- *Screen Tracking of Research Engagement (STORE) in the Era of GenAI* by Zhao, Cho, Aaltonen, and Straub proposes a methodology for verifying the authenticity of human-generated responses in online behavioral research. As generative AI makes it harder to differentiate human from machine outputs, STORE's approach can preserve data integrity, inform better service experiences, and maintain trust in digital research ecosystems (Zhao et al., 2025).
- *Generative AI Transparency and Predictability: A Case Study at Scholastic Inc.* by Bauman, Wang, Chacko, Zhao, Mandviwalla, and Sankaran examines how organizations can achieve greater transparency, predictability, and reliability in AI-driven services. Their case study at a prominent publishing company underscores the importance of robust data governance, explainability, and user trust, hinting at frameworks that balance innovation with accountability (Bauman et al., 2025)
- *The Human-AI Handshake Framework: A Bidirectional Approach to Human-AI Collaboration* by Pyae redefines AI-human collaboration as a partnership. The framework introduces five attributes—information exchange, mutual learning, validation, feedback, and capability augmentation—fostering a dynamic, evolving relationship. Emphasizing bi-directional interaction, transparency, and ethics ensures AI complements rather than replaces human decision-making, promoting trustworthy and accountable AI-driven services (Pyae, 2025).

Conclusions and Perspectives

The papers and discussions at the SIG SVC Workshop collectively illustrate that the advent of generative AI is not merely introducing new technological solutions, but fundamentally reshaping the very essence of service ecosystems. As AI agents become integral actors—often operating autonomously or semi-autonomously—they dynamically alter established roles, resource configurations, and institutional arrangements. These shifts demand rethinking agency, relationships, responsibility, legal understanding and expertise within service ecosystems, prompting both new opportunities and significant challenges.

A central theme emerging from the workshop is the evolving role of humans. As generative AI reduces the need for routine, repetitive tasks, service personnel may shift from "doing" to "orchestrating," focusing on guiding AI agents, interpreting their outputs, and refining their capabilities. Our discussion points to the possibility of humans serving as high-level directors or strategists, intervening primarily to address edge cases, handle complex architectural decisions, or resolve ethical dilemmas. Yet, this raises questions about

how to cultivate foundational expertise and train future professionals when AI obscures the learning-by-doing process or the possibility of non-desirable future scenarios of human-AI labor divisions. If novices never learn the basics because generative AI handles them, how do we ensure that the next generation of experts can still debug, innovate, and govern these systems effectively?

Firms, likewise, face the challenge of redefining their roles and responsibilities. In increasingly AI-driven ecosystems, organizations must navigate from being mere service providers to orchestrators of collaborative value creation networks, integrating human talents, AI capabilities, and diverse data sources, while also taking on the responsibility of controlling for the possibility of adverse societal effects (e,g., Menache et al., 2025). This reframes the role of data from a passive resource to a central asset demanding careful stewardship. Data quality, transparency, and accessibility become critical; organizations that master synthetic data generation, data-sharing agreements, and robust data governance gain strategic leverage. Such capabilities enable us to move towards more reliable, useful, and socially desirable AI-driven services.

Another crucial avenue lies in leveraging AI for social good. While generative AI holds promise for enhancing efficiency and personalization, it can also produce unintended or adverse effects. Issues like algorithmic bias, data privacy breaches, misinformation, and increased inequalities require deliberate attention and responsible innovation approaches (e.g., Nah et al., 2023). Achieving sustainable development goals in terms of both social and ecological impact, in fact, could benefit from generative AI's capabilities—such as improved decision-making, resource allocation, and scenario planning—provided that developers, organizations, and policymakers prioritize digital responsibility and equitable outcomes and minimize the potential for hazardous effects.

At the geopolitical level, globalization and localization forces shape how AI-enabled services unfold. Regulatory differences and cultural nuances play a crucial role in what is technologically and ethically feasible. The unavailability of certain AI services (e.g., "Apple Intelligence" in specific locales due to data protection legislation) exemplifies how local contexts influence global ecosystems. As such, future research and practice must account for the fluid interplay of global standardization efforts, cross-border data flows, and local regulatory frameworks.

From an individual's perspective, generative AI is already changing the way employees and customers interact with each other and with technology in service systems. Conversational agents, anthropomorphic user interfaces, and dynamic content generation transform digital interactions into more fluid, hyper-personalized experiences. This shift can simultaneously enhance user engagement and heighten concerns around trust, privacy, and authenticity (e.g., Korzyński et al., 2024). As human interaction recedes further into the background and becomes more "human-like" through AI simulation, organizations must carefully consider how these changes alter customer expectations, relationships, and satisfaction that were previously exclusive to human interactions.

Due to these changes, service ecosystems themselves are becoming more fluid and reconfigurable. The possibility of ad hoc recombination of service components, facilitated by AI-driven discovery and negotiation, suggests that future service ecosystems could be characterized by dynamic agency configurations. Multiple AI agents, each with specialized functionalities, may coordinate among themselves—exchanging information, seeking consensus, and drawing on human input intermittently. This calls for novel theoretical and managerial lenses to capture the emergent complexity, rapid iteration, and distributed agency in these technologically advanced service environments (e.g., Vargo et al., 2024).

Finally, the complexity and breadth of these challenges underscore the necessity for interdisciplinary research. As the diverse set of workshop participants have shown, scholars from information systems, computer science, human-computer interaction, engineering, management, and other related fields must converge to address multifaceted questions that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. Designing AI-enabled services that prioritize human values and societal benefits requires a rich set of different perspectives to enable a holistically critical assessment of the effects of generative AI in services and service ecosystems. The workshop's contributions signal a call to action: researchers must embrace interdisciplinary frameworks to explore not just how these technologies work, but also their economic, social, legal, and environmental implications.

Topic	Research Questions
1. Evolving Human Roles in AI-Enabled Service Systems	- How can expertise be preserved as AI automates foundational tasks? - What strategies help workers transition to roles focused on guiding and overseeing AI agents, creating desirable work environments? - How can training frameworks support human-AI collaboration in service ecosystems?
2. Organizational Transformation and Data Governance	- What governance models support effective data stewardship and service interactions in AI-driven services? - How can synthetic data and sharing agreements enhance AI service adoption while ensuring compliance? - What are the required organizational capabilities for managing service innovation, e.g., for integrating diverse data sources with AI capabilities?
3. AI for Responsible Service Innovation	- How can generative AI advance sustainable development goals responsibly? - What frameworks ensure equitable and ethical AI-driven innovation?
4. International and Cross-Cultural Factors	- How can service providers balance global scalability with local compliance and cultural norms? - What service strategies address regulatory differences in cross-border AI adoption? - How can organizations align AI services with diverse cultural expectations?
5. Changing User Experiences and the Trust-Privacy Trade-Off	- How can conversational AI foster trust while protecting user privacy? - What principles ensure effective personalization without compromising user autonomy? - How does anthropomorphism in AI interfaces affect user expectations and engagement?
6. Reconfigurable Service Ecosystems and Distributed Agency	- What frameworks can address the complexity of distributed agency in AI-driven ecosystems? - How can AI agents coordinate effectively in dynamic service environments? - What strategies ensure human oversight in rapidly reconfigurable service ecosystems? - What is the reciprocal effect of AI agency and institutional arrangements in service ecosystems?
7. Interdisciplinary Frameworks for AI-Enabled Services	- How can interdisciplinary research ensure AI services align with societal values? - What structures promote collaboration between academia and industry for responsible AI innovation and across disciplines?

Table 1: Research Questions

In conclusion, generative AI's proliferation within service ecosystems signals a paradigm shift from linear value chains to dynamic, data-intensive, and actor-agnostic value configurations. Realizing the potential of this shift requires a holistic approach: one that supports the evolution of human roles, promotes responsible organizational strategies, prioritizes data governance, encourages critical perspectives on its effects, supports societal well-being, respects local variations in regulatory landscapes, and anticipates how service experiences will continue to evolve. As these ecosystems mature, future research and practice will need to provide frameworks, principles, and policies ensuring that generative AI-driven services enrich our societies, economies, and everyday lives—responsibly, ethically, and sustainably.

Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere gratitude to the authors whose contributions enriched this workshop and this editorial with diverse insights and fresh perspectives. We are grateful to the ICIS 2024 organizing committee for providing the platform and environment conducive to meaningful discussions and scholarly

exchange. We also thank Susanne Robra-Bissantz for her invaluable peer review of this editorial. All authors of this editorial contributed equally to its development and are listed in alphabetical order.

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