Subject: ISS Spotlight Series: Can AI Help Us Better Understand Human Decision-Making? — Alok Gupta

The INFORMS Information Systems Society (ISS) **Spotlight Series** highlights the broader narratives, influence, and real-world impact of IS scholarship. The series features impactful research and the stories behind it, showcases industry cases that bridge theory and practice, and shares innovative teaching experiences and educational resources with the IS community.

We are delighted to announce that the next speaker in the ISS Spotlight Series will be Prof. **Alok Gupta**. **What if AI could explain human decisions better than humans can explain themselves?** In this session, Alok will explore this provocative question and share his insights on how LLMs can serve as a cognitive **"mirror and mentor,"** revealing tacit knowledge, improving human–AI collaboration, and reshaping the future of work.

Speaker: Dr. Alok Gupta (Curtis L. Carlson Schoolwide Chair in Information Management at University of Minnesota; Former Editor-in-Chief of *Information Systems Research*)

Time: 8:00–9:00 PM US Eastern Time, Monday, October 19

Title: **HumansX "The Mirror and the Mentor": Using LLMs to Explain Human Decision-Making at Work**

Abstract: As AI systems become increasingly embedded in decision-making, a significant amount of research attention has focused on explainable AI (xAI) which tries to make decisions made by machines understandable to humans. My claim is that a more transformative opportunity lies in reversing this lens! In this talk, I argue that AI systems, including large language models (LLMs), when designed and used appropriately, can serve as powerful tools to explain human decisions -- often better than humans can explain themselves.

Drawing from a series of published and unpublished studies, I will first talk about how human limitations, e.g., poor metaknowledge, impair effective collaboration with AI. These cognitive blind spots are fundamental constraints that limit human-AI synergy. Next, I will explore how AI systems can mitigate these challenges: i) by judging human ability more accurately than humans judge themselves; ii) by selectively choosing when to advise or accept delegation, and iii) by combining exactly the right forms of system information to help people delegate well. I will also touch on how this same logic scales from individual decisions to the design of work across whole organizations.

Building on these ideas, I introduce new empirical findings showing that LLMs can externalize tacit human knowledge from behavior more effectively than humans can articulate it. This has profound implications for training, team design, and knowledge transfer. Rather than relying solely on human introspection, organizations can use LLMs to model the "how" behind expert decisions, thereby facilitating more scalable, accurate, and interpretable workflows using machines as well as humans.

Taken together, these results invite a reimagination of the role of AI beyond a tool to augment decisions where it can act as a cognitive mirror and mentor, helping us better understand and organize human judgment in the future of work. I will close with some reflections on how to construct a research stream

using a bottoms-up approach where researchers can organically observe emergent framing as enough evidence accumulates and can be verified through multi-method research.

If you plan to attend, please **preregister using the following link (it takes less than one minute)**:

https://auburn.zoom.us/meeting/register/zoezkX1cR7SwbE9vQFkzCw

You should receive a confirmation email with the Zoom login details immediately after registration. If you do not receive it, please check your junk or spam folder, or contact Dr. Ian Ho (ian.ho@auburn.edu).

We hope you will join us for this exciting session!