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MIS

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EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

## **‘IT GURUS AND AI EVANGELISTS’**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper questions how certain actors act as Information Technology (IT) “gurus” and become actively involved in making certain IT concepts popular through the IT fashion setting process. To examine this theoretically and topically important issue, the paper relies upon existing Information Systems (IS) research on IT fashion and rhetorics, as well as upon the management literature that has questioned the roles of management gurus in shaping popular management ideas.

It first delves into the revelatory case of Andrew McAfee, an actor who has been highly involved in developing and popularizing the IT concept of “Enterprise 2.0.” In this study, we analyzed the process of expansion then waning of the Enterprise 2.0 concept between 2006 and 2012, and the roles that McAfee played throughout this process. We are now in the process of adding a revelatory case of case of an AI “guru”. Not only will we analyze the process of expansion and the roles that the AI guru(s) plays in this process, but we will also compare and contrast the two cases.

This study allows us to draw theoretical implications of significance to IS research, regarding the specific rhetorics that make an IT concept fashionable, regarding how specific actors may become “gurus” through engaging in discursive and performative legitimacy building in a field characterized by multiple actors with diverse interests and competencies, and regarding the IT fashion setting process as a whole, i.e. not only its expansion, but also its potential decline.