Harmonizing Society and Information Technology

Global networking is rapidly expanding via information technology. Based upon the trends of technologies that interact with our daily lives, the Department of Social Informatics seeks to clarify the structures of highly complex information societies and actually design information systems that are globally useful. Therefore, we endeavor to support globalizing activities in the areas of culture, economics, ecology, disaster management, healthcare and education.
Information is Born in the Lives of People

Sources of social information do not exist on the Internet. These sources are usually found in people’s daily lives. Social informatics includes processes from the acquisition of information from the sources, through constructing systems to utilize the information, to designing a better society using those information systems. For example, we collect ecological information relevant to fish by using bio-logging techniques for fishery resource conservation. We also glean biological information from forest ecosystems using various types of sensors to optimize the sustainable utilization of ecosystem services. Then, we study methods for database development to organize that information on natural resources and environments. Moreover, we study informatics applications in the fields of medical services and education, and also determine what types of information are needed for disaster prevention and harm minimization. We consider ways to utilize the data to design societies and social systems. We, the people in the Department of Social Informatics, work to acquire data directly related to our lives and societies, and to reformulate and store it in the most accessible and useful way to enable the development of our sustainable future.

YOSHIKAWA Masatoshi
Department of Social Informatics

Masatoshi Yoshikawa received B.E., M.E. and Ph.D. degrees from Department of Information Science, Kyoto University in 1980, 1982 and 1985, respectively. He was on the faculty of Kyoto Sangyo University, Nara Institute of Science and Technology (NAIST) and Nagoya University before he joined the Department of Social Informatics, Kyoto University in 2006. His general research interests are in fundamental studies of data science and its social deployment. He is a past editor of The VLDB Journal and Information Systems.

OHTE Nobuhito
Department of Social Informatics

He is a Professor of the Biosphere Informatics Laboratory in the Department of Social Informatics at Kyoto University. His research themes are to understand mechanisms of hydrological controls of nutrient transformations and transportations in the forested catchment, and to elucidate the geographical variations of those ecosystem dynamics among various types of climatic and geological conditions. He holds a BA in forestry from Graduate School of Agriculture at Kyoto University in 1987, and a PhD also from Kyoto University in forest hydrology in 1992. He was awarded Brueke Prize for Ecology in 2013. He is currently an associate editor of Biogeosciences (European Geoscience Union).

Fundamental Studies of Informatics and its Social Deployment

Information technologies are expected to become a driving force for dramatic change in many established social systems. Students in the Department of Social Informatics will understand both the possibilities and limitations of information technologies by mastering its basics. This understanding will also enable students to learn the social deployment of information technologies. Faculty members of the department include researchers in information technologies, and domain experts in biology, agriculture, medicine, disaster-prevention, and education. A variety of educational opportunities are provided to students, including the acclaimed advisor system. The educational goal of our department is to produce quality graduates who can resolve social problems or design new social systems by utilizing information technologies. In our department, many research topics are being studied even in laboratories oriented towards computer science. If you are interested in mastering information technologies and thereby creating a better society, you are strongly invited to join us.
Outline

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Graduate Curriculum

Courses for the Master's Program

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Courses for the Doctoral Program

| Advanced Seminar on Social Information Networks | Advanced Seminar on Medical Informatics |
| Advanced Seminar on Biosphere Informatics       | Advanced Seminar on Social Informatics  |
| Advanced Seminar on Regional Disaster Prevention Information Systems | Advanced Seminar on Social Informatics  |

Teaching Staff

Professors

YOSHIKAWA Masatoshi; KANDA Takayuki; TAJIMA Keishi (I, Secondary Appointment); ABE Masayuki (NTT, Adjunct); MORIYA Kazuyuki; OHTE Nobuhito; TATANO Hirokazu (D, Affiliated); YAMORI Katsuya (D, Affiliated); HATAYAMA Michinori (D, Affiliated); OGATA Hiroki (M, Affiliated); KURODA Tomohiro (H, Affiliated)

Associate Professors

MA Qiang; JATOWT Adam; SUGIYAMA Kazunari; LIN Donghui; TIBOUCHI Mehdii (NTT, Adjunct); KINOSHIKA Takashi (Nomura Research Institute, Adjunct); KOYAMA Lina A.; SAMADDAR Subhajyoti (D, Affiliated); ONISHI Masamitsu (D, Affiliated); OKAMOTO Kazuya (H, Affiliated)

Senior Lecturers

EVEN Jani; MOURI Kousuke (M, Affiliated); FLANAGAN Brendan John (M, Affiliated)

Assistant Professors

SHIMIZU Toshiyuki; CAO Yang; BRŠCĆ Dražen; NISHIZAWA Hideaki; VINCENOT Christian; NAKANO Genta (D, Affiliated); SANTOS Luciano (H, Affiliated); HIRAGI Shusuke (H, Affiliated)
Social Information Model

The development of information networks has enabled the widespread use of information bases distributed throughout the world. The Social Information Model Division’s Groups are based around a discussion of the formation of these distributed information bases. Through a study of the creation of working social information systems such as multimedia libraries, the Groups in this Division teach and study information models of today and their possible forms in the future, covering such topics as the problems that information systems cause and their impact on society.

Distributed Information Systems

New technologies for managing and utilizing distributed information can make our society evolve much more

Contemporary society relies heavily upon the massive amount of information that is found mostly on the Internet. Social progress will depend upon the establishment and continuous evolution of a) technologies to enable the rapid and accurate transmission of data; and b) technologies to allow rapid searches of vast volumes of data to retrieve required information in a timely manner. For this reason, we conduct fundamental research on data mining, geographic information systems, Web information systems, social network analysis, and privacy protection. We also carry out application-oriented research such as health/medical big data analysis, scientific data management, integrated utilization of knowledge bases and search engines, utilization of scholarly data, educational information systems, in cooperation with domain experts.

Human-Robot Interaction

Intelligent robotics for our daily social environments

There are a growing number of everyday applications for artificial intelligence and robotics such as social robots, self-driving cars, and automated shops. We expect that future society will be ubiquitous with various robots. Towards such a robotized society, we aim to study robots that interact with people and operate in harmony alongside them. Such robots are embodied agents with sensory feedback that have the ability to interact in real-time with their environments. Consequently, we conduct fundamental research in intelligent robotics, human interaction, sensor networks, and artificial intelligence (AI). We are aiming for applications in the service industry, elderly care, health care, collaborative work places, and learning.

Social Media

Information environment for sharing and utilizing all useful information in the world

"Sharing and utilizing all useful information in the world" may sound to you like a mission statement of a major search engine company. It has, however, been the dream of researchers in the area of database systems and information retrieval since a long time ago. Thanks to the advance of computer and network technologies, we can now easily share and utilize data of large volume and high diversity which we cannot even think about until decades ago, and this "dream" is not a daydream anymore but is the goal. To achieve this goal, we conduct research on technologies for collecting, analyzing, extracting information and technologies for retrieving information you want from the extracted information. Our recent research themes includes: extraction of social information from the Web, social network analysis, information retrieval, and information access interface.

[Professor: TAJIMA Keishi]
Social Information Network

Information networks enable us to communicate by various means, regardless of spatial or temporal constraints, and influence the structure of our society. The use of these information networks will create new social information systems and contribute to social change on a global scale. The Social Information Network Division consists of the Global Information Network Group, the Information Security Adjunct Unit, and the Market and Organizational Information Systems Adjunct Unit.

Global Information Network

This Group aims to generate advanced technologies for Internet-based worldwide collaboration. Based on artificial intelligence and a human interface, we conduct global research activities with researchers in the US, Europe and Asia to build real-world systems while addressing the latest technological issues including services computing, Internet of Things (IoT) and crowdsourcing.

[Associate Professor: LIN Donghui]

Multilingual Communication Support for Youths using the Language Grid

Column

From the World to Japan, from Japan to the World

Over 40 foreign students are enrolled in the Department of Social Informatics, representing more than 15 countries. You may obtain a sense of global community by studying in such a diverse environment. Many students from the Department of Social Informatics make presentations, discuss research, and join internship programs abroad.

A welcome party is held in October to welcome newcomers from foreign countries, and various kinds of international exchanges happen on a daily basis.
Biosphere Informatics

There is a great variety of organisms in the biosphere, for example in environments such as forests, farmlands or seas. These organisms have complex interrelationships, and influence our society in various ways. Our division aims to comprehensively understand the information about individual animals as well as bioresources and production by using various methods and techniques to gather data about the biosphere. We also study the influence of human activities on the global environment and human society itself through the production and management of bioresources and ecosystems.

Bioresource Informatics

*Seeking utilization and conservation of bioresources*

This group discusses and studies a wide range of themes including system evaluation for the sustainable production of bioresources, the conservation of endangered species, and the revitalization of local communities engaged in bioresource production. In order to gather and analyze bioresource data, this group works in the development and application of new research methods involving the use of GPS, biotelemetry, biologging and image analysis.

[Professor: MORIYA Kazuyuki, Assistant Professor: NISHIZAWA Hideaki]

Various methods and techniques are applied

Environmental Informatics

*Seeking conservation and utilization of ecosystems*

Recently, society has been interested in environmental changes at various spatial/temporal scales. This group works on topics such as understanding/monitoring environmental information or the role of various organisms in ecosystems. Our research interests cover various fields related to terrestrial ecosystems, ranging from their diverse inhabitants such as plants, animals and microbes to their complete physical environment. We study how these relate to other organisms or environments in the ecosystems, or how human society influences them with respect to their sustainability in a changing environment. Various methods/approaches such as field investigation, questionnaires, remote-sensing or chemical/isotopic analyses are applied to collect and analyze key information about these ecosystems and organisms.

[Professor: OHTE Nobuhito, Associate Professor: KOYAMA Lina A., Assistant Professor: VINCENOT Christian]

Fieldwork is conducted in various types of sites
Disasters are abrupt and large-scale environmental changes. The natural, artificial and social environments (and especially the balance among them) that have been constructed and maintained by regional communities are forced to change. If the impact of a disaster is sufficiently severe, local communities may be unable to recover the balance that they had before the catastrophe, and may be forced to create a new balance. This was demonstrated in dramatic fashion by the catastrophic damage inflicted by the Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake and the subsequent suffering in the stricken area. The objective of disaster prevention is to minimize the effects of disastrous events. Unfortunately, it is beyond our power to eliminate natural threats, such as the disasters wrought by earthquakes and typhoons. Efforts at disaster prevention help to make society more resistant to disasters by: (1) enhancing our ability to foresee and predict threats; (2) improving our ability to limit the degree of damage; and (3) minimizing the effects of the damage. Disasters are the greatest obstacle to the sustainable development of humankind. According to figures from the International Red Cross, disasters annually take the lives of 130,000 people and cause some $US440 billion in damage. Population growth is driving urbanization. Societies are becoming more complex and diverse. Meanwhile, disasters are growing in scale and occurring more frequently. It could be said that society’s ability to withstand disasters is rapidly diminishing. Information processing lies at the heart of disaster prevention. This Division will focus primarily on disaster prevention in urban areas and will teach students about establishment of information systems designed to achieve “urban disaster reduction” that both minimizes the immediate effects of disasters and shortens aftermath duration.

**Integrated Disaster Management Systems**

**Aiming to build disaster prevention systems to ensure a safe and secure society**

To build a safe and secure society, we need to put in place disaster prevention systems that will enable the planning and implementation of disaster risk control, financing, and other integrated policies in a rational manner. We will take an informational, organizational and economic approach to find out what kind of disaster prevention system will result in cities with greater resistance to natural disasters.

[Professor: TATANO Hirokazu, Associate Professor: SAMADDAR Subhajyoti]

**Emergency Management for Disaster Reduction Systems**

**Social scientific research for disaster damage reduction**

Society is required to prepare and take actions to reduce the potential damage of disasters by sharing information and knowledge concerning potential disaster risks through communication among the members of society. This laboratory aims at developing disaster risk reduction systems through practical studies from the perspective of social psychology and systems analysis. The research interests include disaster psychology, disaster risk information and communication, disaster education, regional crisis management and decision making support, financing for disaster recovery.

[Professor: YAMORI Katsuya, Associate Professor: ONISHI Masamitsu, Assistant Professor: NAKANO Genta]
Crisis Information Management System

Disaster Information Systems with Information Technology

Our goal is to establish design methodologies for the department of effective disaster management systems against various types of disaster for National/Local Governments, local communities in affected areas and disaster relief organizations. One of the most important key technologies are spatial temporal database to record, visualize and analyze current/near future status in affected areas. In addition our laboratory focuses on human behavior before/during/after disasters as targets to supply valuable services.

[Professor: HATAYAMA Michinori]

Medical Informatics (Affiliated)

Creating a new vision for the future of clinical medicine in the information age

Although nobody performs any modern clinical medical activity without computational support, the current clinical system is still poorly adapted to the information revolution. The Medical Informatics Laboratory tries to create a new vision for the future of clinical medicine in the information age through research aimed to implement information platforms for, to analyze clinical information of, and to provide feasible information support for existing clinical entities, including Kyoto University Hospital. Our research includes any topics interfacing medicine and informatics, such as clinical system development (Ubiquitous Hospital Information Systems, Telemedicine Systems with Internet of Things (IoT), Epidemiology Information Platforms, Electronic Health Record (EHR)), Data Health (Hospital Administration Management, Clinical Data Mining, Patient Status Prediction or Medical Image Processing using Artificial Intelligence (AI)), and Information Support Applications (Hospital Administration Simulation, Computer Aided Diagnosis, Clinical Decision Support, VR-based medical education, Health Tourism).

[Professor: KURODA Tomohiro, Associate Professor: OKAMOTO Kazuya, Assistant Professors: HIRAGI Shusuke, SANTOS Luciano]

Learning and Educational Technologies (Affiliated)

Toward Data-Driven Education

Our research focuses on information technology that supports activities in education and learning by analyzing their log data:
(1) Development of the infrastructure for accumulation and analysis of educational big data
(2) Analysis of learning experiences by using life log technologies
(3) Knowledge awareness for collaborative learning support
(4) Educational systems for Information security and ethics

[Professor: OGATA Hiroaki, Lecturers: MOURI Kousuke, FLANAGAN Brendan John]
Informatics is changing our society. Everything in our life and business is based on data and networking, and global flows of products are rapidly being replaced by flows of data and services. In this unit, we focus our research on these areas: 1. Analysis of socioeconomic mechanisms in the digital economy and society, 2. Scientific design of new businesses, 3. Study of public policies regarding dependable management and operation of the Internet, and 4. Research on personal data protection for secure and reliable digital business. These studies are based on collaborative research and experiments with a private think-tank, governments, international organizations, industry associations, ICT companies, local communities, and virtual communities.

[Professor: YOSHAKAWA Masatoshi, Associate Professor: KINOSHITA Takashi]
Special Education Program of the Department of Social Informatics

1. Specialized Subjects and Special Lecture

In the first year of the Master’s program, students are introduced to specialized subjects including the design and analysis of information systems, and the relationship between information and society. They can acquire the fundamentals of informatics from the ground up through these subjects, and even students with less specific experience in informatics can benefit by combining their informatics and other expertise. In addition, we have more than 50 special lectures a year in our department, for which we invite lecturers from various universities, research institutes and government offices.

2. Education for innovation

The Department of Social Informatics joins Kyoto University Design School, in which students take a course titled "FBL (Field based Learning)/ PBL (Problem-based Learning)" that helps them acquire the skills needed to find and solve real-world problems. In this course, students select one of a variety of themes, and form small groups to tackle specific problems. The themes include "Designing a new environment for education: creating a place that fosters creativity", "Design of places for conversation over books and tea", and "Organization design in crowd-sourcing". Kyoto University Summer Design School arose from activities mainly led by the Department of Social Informatics, and has become a seasonal tradition in summer, attracting more than 250 participants to share the same innovative space. Over 20 different kinds of themes were proposed by companies and universities, and were tackled by many students eager to solve real-world problems: they went into the field, and used trial-and-error methods by actually creating prototypes. The Department of Social Informatics proposed themes such as "Predicting Kyoto in 2050 by simulation" and "Designing safety into apartment buildings: first priority, disaster prevention".

3. Education for globalization

The Department of Social Informatics and Berlitz worked together to develop teaching materials that have been used in a “strategic communication seminar” provided by the Kyoto University Design School. Students in the Department of Social Informatics can benefit from the focused English lecture presented by lecturers from Berlitz.