Call for papers – Special Issue

Service Innovation in Society 5.0: Theories and Practices

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Text of the call

The Special Issue "Service Innovation in Society 5.0: Between Theories and Practices" aims to explore the transformative potential of service innovation in Society 5.0, which can be considered as a human-centered society that integrates advanced technologies to address societal challenges and enhance well-being (Fukuyama, 2018).

In fact, service innovation and Society 5.0 are intricately connected, as the former is fundamental to realizing the human-centered, technologically advanced vision of the latter. Basically, Society 5.0 can be considered as an evolution from the information society (i.e., Society 4.0) to a super-smart society. This transformation leverages cutting-edge technologies – e.g., artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), big data, and robotics – not solely for economic growth but to address complex societal challenges, like aging populations, sustainability, and social inclusion (Mattsson, Sørensen, 2015; Fukuyama, 2018; Opazo-Basáez et al., 2022; Machado da Matta A., 2025). A distinctive feature of Society 5.0 is its focus on human-centeredness, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and equity in the development of service innovations. Traditional technology-driven paradigms often prioritize economic efficiency over societal impact. In contrast, Society 5.0 encourages service innovation that balances technological advancement with the ethical, social, and environmental dimensions of innovation (Martin et al., 2018).

In this context, service innovation serves as a critical mechanism for integrating technological advances into systems, processes, and interactions that create value for individuals and society at large. Indeed, service innovation can be defined as the introduction of new or improved services, processes, and business models that enhance customer experiences and operational efficiencies (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015). Within Society 5.0, this innovation takes on a broader role, encompassing the co-creation of value within ecosystems that align human needs with technological capabilities. For example, digital healthcare services enabled by AI and IoT can provide personalized medical interventions, enhance diagnostic accuracy, and improve healthcare accessibility (Mansour et al., 2021).

Thus, the integration of service innovation into Society 5.0 highlights the importance of ecosystems, namely interdependent networks where organizations, individuals, and technologies collaborate to co-create value. These ecosystems are dynamic and require continuous adaptation to align with societal changes and technological advancements (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). In Society 5.0, service ecosystems are enabled by digital platforms and data-driven processes, fostering collaboration across public, private, and civil sectors. For example, smart cities represent a convergence of service innovations in energy, transportation, and governance, supported by IoT and AI, and exemplify how multi-stakeholder collaboration can address societal challenges such as climate change and urbanization while improving citizens' quality of life (Ostrom et al., 2015).

However, the relationship between service innovation and Society 5.0 is not without challenges. A critical issue lies in the ethical and governance implications of data-driven service innovation (Bibri & Krogstie, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires balancing the benefits of innovation with safeguards that ensure trust and equity. Moreover, service innovations must be designed to bridge digital divides, ensuring that technological advancements benefit all societal groups, including marginalized populations.

From a managerial perspective, implementing service innovation in Society 5.0 requires dynamic capabilities that enable organizations to sense, seize, and transform opportunities in complex environments (Teece, 2018). Managers must foster organizational cultures that encourage experimentation, collaboration, and agility, ensuring that service innovations are both technologically feasible and socially impactful.

Policymakers also play a crucial role by creating regulatory frameworks and incentives that support inclusive and sustainable service innovation.

So, service innovation provides the tools and mechanisms to operationalize the vision of a super-smart society, while Society 5.0 offers a human-centered framework that guides the ethical, inclusive, and sustainable application of service innovations. Thus, interdisciplinary collaboration among academics, practitioners, and policymakers will be essential to fully harness the potential of service innovation in shaping a better future.

According to the above, this Special Issue seeks theoretical and practical research avenues, frameworks, drivers, barriers, and best practices able to address topics such as:

- **Conceptual Perspectives**
  How can service innovation be framed and theorized within the context of Society 5.0?
  What frameworks and models capture the dynamics of service ecosystems in Society 5.0?
  How does service innovation shape and transform the interaction between organizations and society?
- **Technological and Digital Dimensions**
  The role of digital transformation in enabling innovative services across sectors (e.g., healthcare, education, mobility).
  Case studies of AI, IoT, blockchain, or other emerging technologies that drive value creation in service contexts.
  Ethical considerations, privacy concerns, and governance challenges in data-driven service innovation.
- **Social and Economic Impacts**
  How does service innovation contribute to Society 5.0 goals such as inclusion, equity, and sustainability?
  The measurement of societal and economic benefits in service innovation projects.
  Environmental and circular economy approaches in service design and delivery.
- **Managerial and Policy Implications**

Strategies for organizations to foster innovation aligned with Society 5.0 principles.
Public-private partnerships and the role of policy in promoting inclusive and sustainable service ecosystems.
Organizational capabilities and managerial approaches for implementing innovative services.

Contributors are encouraged to adopt interdisciplinary approaches that draw from fields such as economics, management, technology studies, and sociology to deepen scholars' and practitioners' understanding of service innovation in this transformative era.

We look forward to receiving your contributions and advancing the dialogue on service innovation in Society 5.0.

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Timetable for submission and acceptance of papers:

- **31st December 2025**: Deadline for complete manuscripts through online paper submission: https://jiem.manuscriptmanager.net

Guideline for authors: http://innovations.cairn.info/en/instructions-for-authors/

- **Autumn 2026 :** Final notification for acceptance

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