Interaction Gaps in PhD Education and ICT as a Way Forward

Results from a Study in Sweden

***Corresponding author:*** Naghmeh Aghaee, PhD Candidate, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), Stockholm University. Borgarfjordsgatan 12, SE-164 07 Kista, Sweden. Telephone: +46(0)8161638, email: nam@dsv.su.se

Dr. Åsa Smedberg, Associate Professor, PhD, Head of IS unit, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), Stockholm University. Borgarfjordsgatan 12, SE-164 07 Kista, Sweden. Telephone: +46(0)8161699, email: asasmed@dsv.su.se

Dr. Thashmee Karunaratne, Researcher, PhD, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), Stockholm University. Borgarfjordsgatan 12, SE-164 07 Kista, Sweden. Telephone: +46(0)86747498, email: thasmee@dsv.su.se

Dr. Henrik Hansson, Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), Stockholm University. Borgarfjordsgatan 12, SE-164 07 Kista, Sweden. Telephone: +46(0)8161696, email: henrik.hansson@dsv.su.se

Dr. William Byron Jobe, Researcher, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), Stockholm University. Borgarfjordsgatan 12, SE-164 07 Kista, Sweden. Telephone: +46(0)86747478, email: william@dsv.su.se

Dr. Matti Tedre, Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), Stockholm University. Borgarfjordsgatan 12, SE-164 07 Kista, Sweden. Telephone: +46(0)8161172, email: matti.tedre@acm.org

# **Abstract**

Many research studies have highlighted the low completion rate and slow progress in PhD education. Universities strive to improve throughput and quality in their PhD education programs. This study investigated the perceived problems from PhD students’ points of view, and how an Information and Communication Technology Support System (ICTSS) may alleviate these problems. Data were collected through an online open questionnaire sent to all PhD students at the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences at Stockholm University with a 59% response rate. The results revealed a number of problems in PhD education and how ICT has the potential to facilitate to improve PhD education and PhD students’ satisfaction, and have positive impacts on PhD students’ stress. Although the number of informants was not so large, the result of the study provided some rudimentary ideas that refer to interaction problems and how an ICTSS can facilitate PhD education.

***Key words:*** PhD education, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Support System, Interaction, Peer communication, Survey.