

The New Silk Road

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The silk road was a historical trade route that changed the nature of commerce in the ancient world. The silk road was really a network (not unlike packet switching on the internet) that enabled exchange of a wide variety of goods including silk, precious stones and even rhubarb as well as information. The old silk road is history. But what about the countries and cities along the way that made it famous? How do these regions build on the successes of the past to create opportunities for the future? The goods and products and culture are still there but historic

commercial significance has been superseded by more advanced transportation means and broad-based commerce in the regions has become forgotten. The internet, however, may re-open our awareness of these regions and the goods and services that they can provide.

In this panel we will explore electronic commerce in those countries and cities that once were famous and may prove again to be as part of the new silk road. Given our lack of direct knowledge of this region, our approach will be one of research question development and discovery from published sources and local contacts as well as direct visitation. We are in the process of contacting and analyzing information received from institutions in the region that will be presented at the conference. Our approach is based upon a set of previously developed dimensions addressing aspects of awareness, access, service availability, mastery of technologies, experience, skills, attitudes (motivation), culture, and empowerment of civil society among other emergent attributes at individual and community levels. In this research forum, we will share what we have learned and seek to engage the audience in active dialog to guide future research direction.