

# An Empirical Assessment of Researcher Perspectives

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# In Conventional Scientific Research there are many Research Design Elements

- Research Question(s)
- Unit of Study
- Population
- Sampling Frame
- Sample Selection
- Survey Design
- Data Collection Design
- Data Analysis Design
- ...

# A Missing Element of Research Design 'Perspective'

The view from the standpoint  
of a stakeholder  
in the phenomena  
that are under observation



# Unit of Study



Organisational Dyad

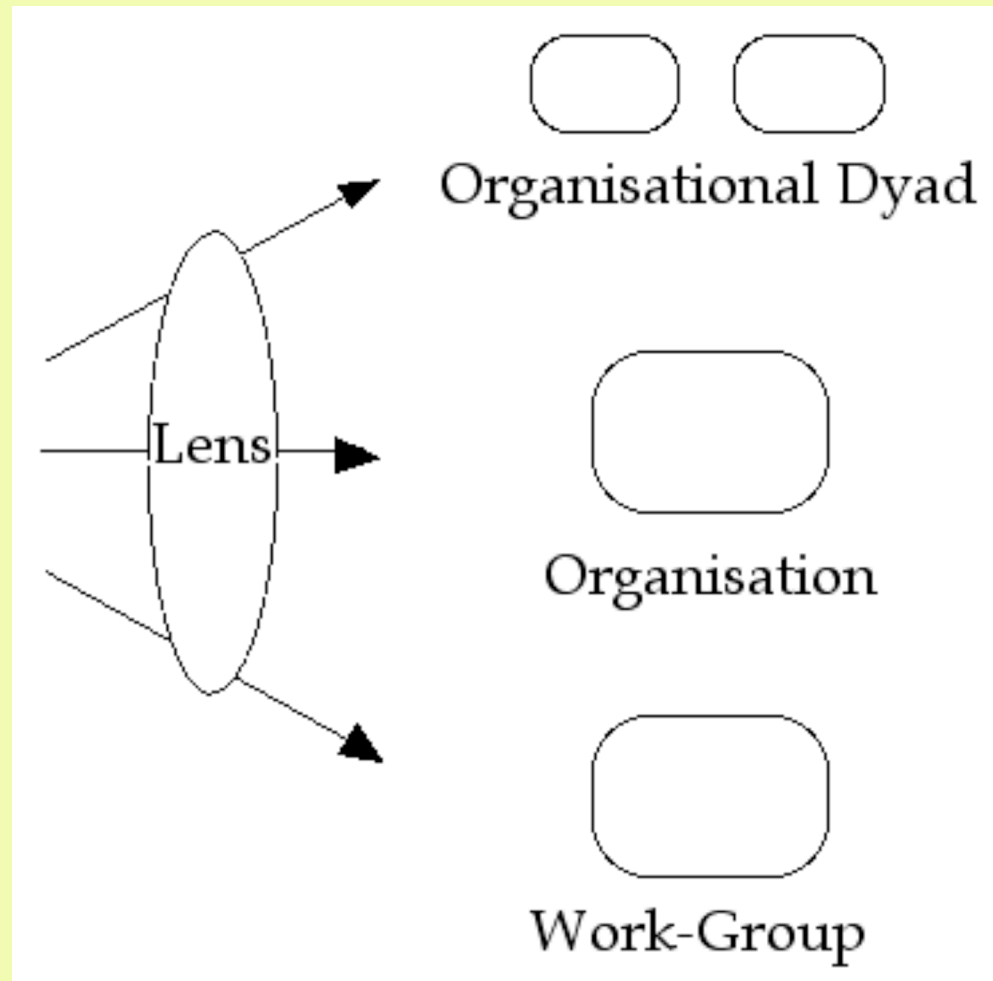


Organisation



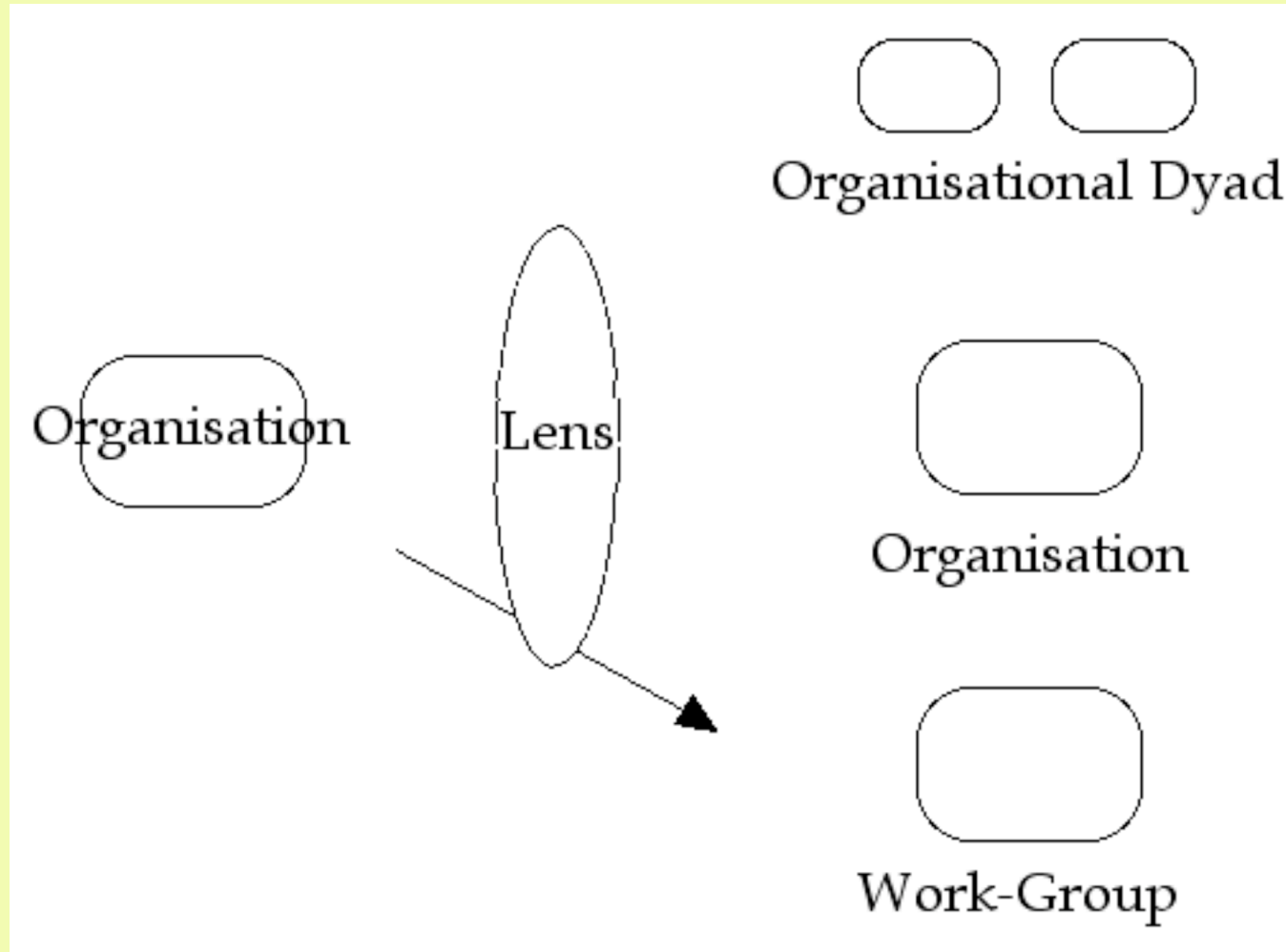
Work-Group

# Unit of Study



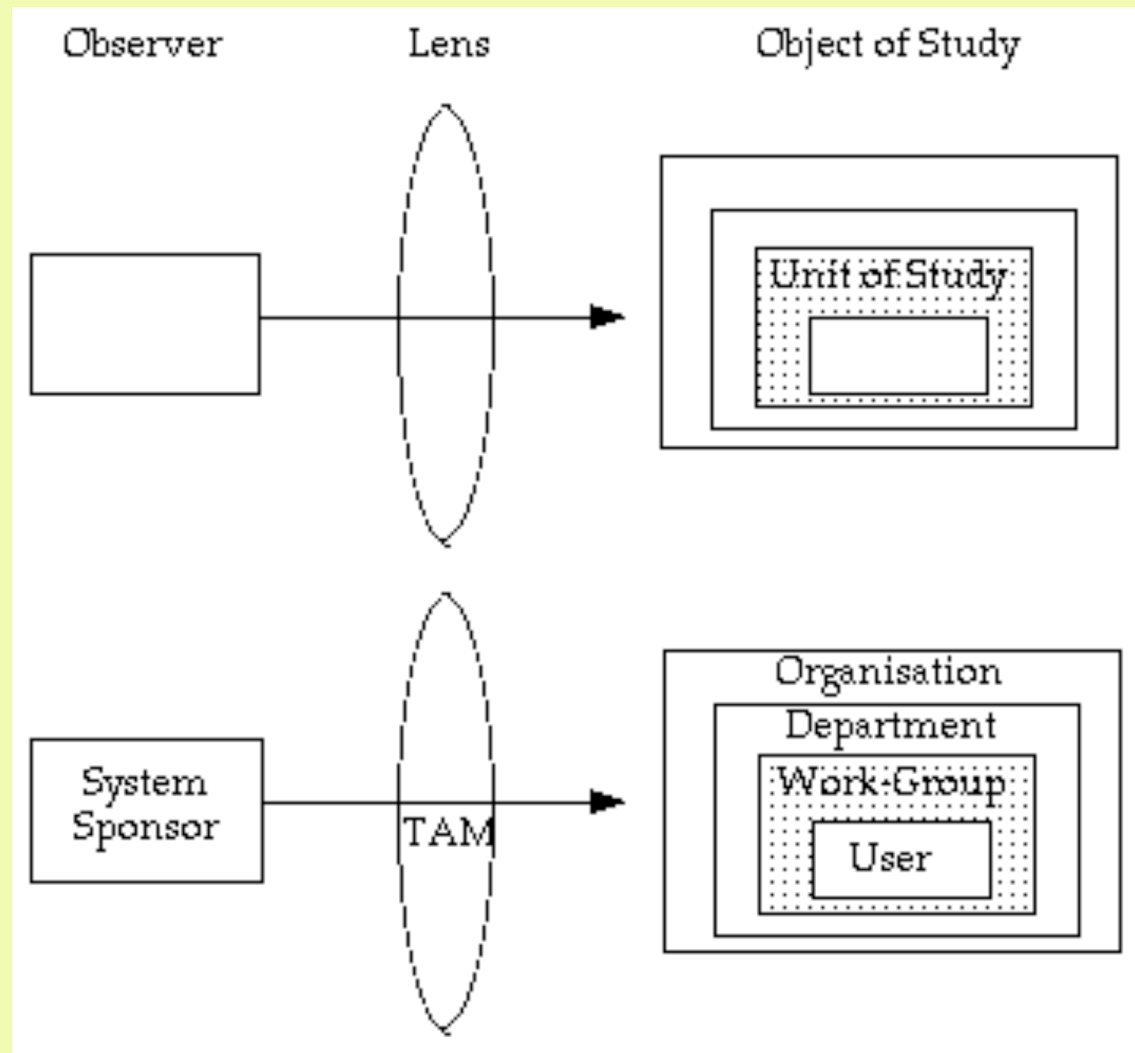
# Perspective

# Unit of Study



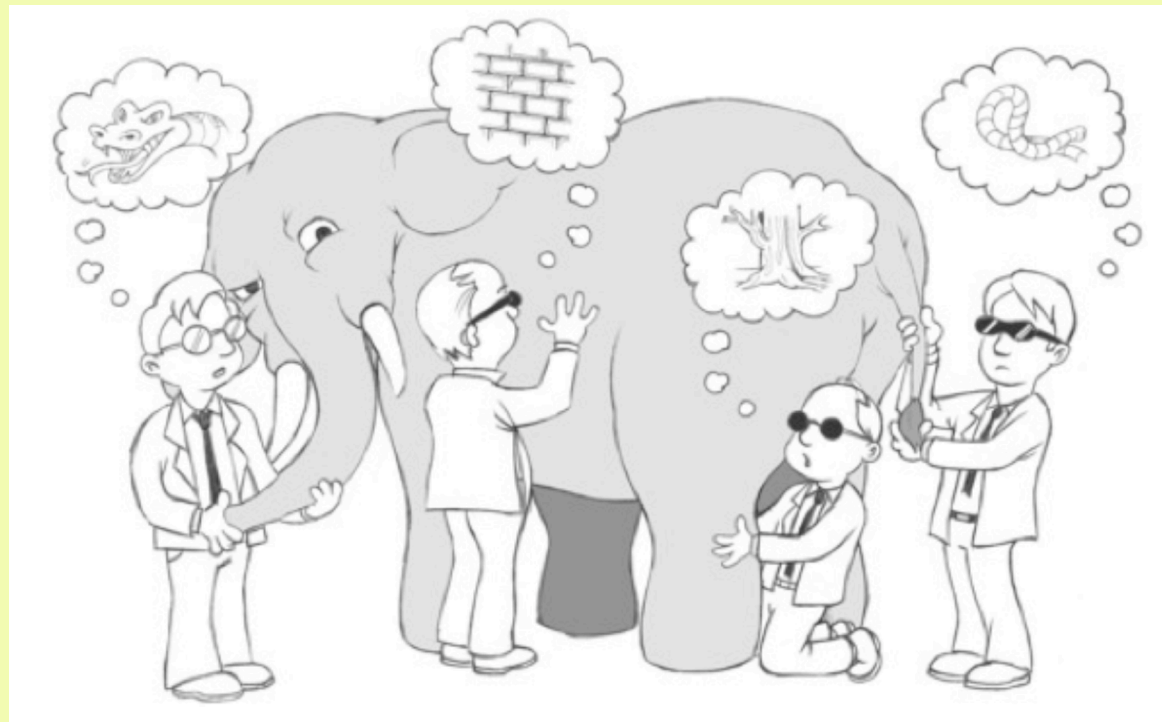
# Conceptual Model

## Example



# Insights from Interpretivism

- Phenomena are subject to multiple interpretations
- Observation from a single perspective risks inappropriate inferences being drawn





## Insights from Interpretivism

- Phenomena are subject to multiple interpretations
- Observation from a single perspective risks inappropriate inferences being drawn

## Implications of Interpretivism

- The researcher has a perspective
- The researcher's perspective is not universal
- The researcher's perspective influences research conception, questions, design, analysis, results
- The researcher's perspective should be declared

# A Missing Element of Research Philosophy

- We discuss:
  - **Ontology** (knowledge about existence)
  - **Epistemology**  
(knowledge about knowledge)
  - **Methodology** (knowledge about process)
- **We seldom discuss:**
  - **Teleology**  
(knowledge about purpose, including whose perspectives the purpose reflects)

# Alternative Researcher Perspectives Dimensions and Levels of Abstraction

<u>Economic Dimension</u>	<u>Social Dimension</u>	<u>Environmental Dimension</u>
World Economy	Humanity	The Planet
Supra-National Region (e.g. EU, NAFTA)		
Nation-State	A Society	The Troposphere
Regional Economy		
Sector / Value-Chain	A Community	The Biosphere
Strategic Partners		
Organisation	A Person	A Localised Ecology
Sub-Organisation		

# The Dominant Perspective in IS Research

<u>Economic Dimension</u>	<u>Social Dimension</u>	<u>Environmental Dimension</u>
World Economy	Humanity	The Planet
Supra-National Region (e.g. EU, NAFTA)		
Nation-State	A Society	The Troposphere
Regional Economy		
Sector / Value-Chain	A Community	The Biosphere
Strategic Partners		
<b>The System-Sponsor</b>	A Person	A Localised Ecology
Sub-Organisation		

# Single-Perspective Research

## The Perspective of the System-Sponsor

- RQ: What proportion of social media users need to authorise the service-provider to exploit their data, in order to ensure that advertising-based business models are viable?

## A Perspective other than the System-Sponsor's

- RQ: What techniques and tools are available to social media users to enable them to obfuscate, subvert or falsify their identities and locations, and how understandable and practicable are those techniques and tools?

# Beyond Single-Perspective Research

## Dual-Perspective Research

- RQ: How do the views of social media users and service-providers compare in relation to Terms of Service and privacy features and policies?

## Generic-Perspective Research

- RQ: What are the social and economic impacts of the current, exploitative business model for social media; and what benefits and disbenefits would accrue to which stakeholders if regulatory measures were imposed?

**Passive**  
Human Resources  
Consumer as Prey



**Active**  
Actors



**Alternative  
Organisational  
Perceptions  
of People**

**Engaged**  
Participants



# The Bled eConference Series 1988-2016

- **The Body of Work**  
28 annual plus 1 special section – 1100 papers
- **Accessibility**  
13 (1988-2000) hard-copy only  
16 (2001-2015 plus 1 special section) on CD,  
on Bled eConference site, and in AIS eLibrary
- **Nature of the Papers**  
7 (1988-1994) were edited only – 147 papers  
22 (1995-2015 plus 1) peer reviewed – 953 papers



# Research Questions

1. What researcher perspectives are evident in papers published in Bled Proceedings?
2. What changes in researcher perspectives are apparent in Bled Proceedings over time?

# Research Method Considerations

- **Protocol**  
Categories of papers  
Extraction of researcher perspective  
Audit Trail
- **Coding Sheets**
- **Pilot Testing**  
Bled eConference Procs 2014  
AJIS Vol. 18 (2014) & 20% sample of ACIS 2014  
EM 25, 2 (June 2015) Issue – Personal Data Mkts
- **Sampling Strategy**  
Pseudo-Random? Stratified Random?  
Stratified Weighted? Sub-population?

# An Extensible Sub-Population Sample

- 2003, 2015
- 2009
- 1997, 1991
- Infill after that if feasible

Rd	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total	Cum.	
1															71													37	108	108	
2				29						33												42								104	212
3							23						48					52						50						173	385
4	10	10	22		27	26		26	37		42	45		50	49		52	51		60	45		41	42		35	45			715	1100

# Object of Study

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2015</u>		<u>Mean</u>
Organisations	86	70	59	63	49		63
Humans	0	12	28	32	49		26
Technologies	14	18	13	5	2		11

## cf. Conference Theme

1991 – EDI: Business Strategy for 90s

1997 – Global Business in Practice

2003 – eTransformation

2009 – eEnablement: Facilitating an Open,  
Effective and Representative eSociety

2015 – eWellbeing

# Object of Study cf. Conference Theme

2016

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# Dimensions

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2015</u>		<u>Mean</u>
Economic	100	91	99	93	84		94
Social	0	9	1	7	16		6
Environmental	0	0	0	0	0		0

# Dimensions

2016

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2015</u>		<u>Mean</u>
Economic	100	91	99	93	84	80	94
Social	0	9	1	7	16	20	6
Environmental	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

# Researcher Perspective

	1991	1997	2003	2009	2015		Mean
System Sponsor	100	82	86	80	78		85
Other	0	3	1	5	3		2
Multiple	0	15	13	15	19		13
Total System Sponsor	100	97	90	95	84		92
O=Human Object & P=System-Sponsor	0	25	89	77	72		75



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Of 131 studies of organisations, only 2 were from a perspective other than that of the System Sponsor (rural business enterprises as users of IT services, individuals as users of online stockbrokers)

Of 23 studies of technologies, all reflected the System Sponsor's needs

# Researcher Perspective

2016

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Other	0	3	1	5	3	14	2
Multiple	0	15	13	15	19	11	13
Total System Sponsor	100	97	90	95	84	83	92
O=Human Object & P=System-Sponsor	0	25	89	77	72	46	75

Parents of deaf children  
Victims of online dating scams  
Mobile users  
(Competition Policy)  
Users of educational technologies

# Humans as the Object of Study

Perspective	%	Count	1991	1997	2003	2009	2015
<b>Other Than System Sponsor</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>3</b>	0	0	0	2	1
<b>Multi-Perspective</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>10</b>					
Dual-Perspective	11%	6	0	2	1	1	2
Generic-Perspective	8%	4	0	1	1	0	2
<b>System Sponsor Only</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>40</b>					
Reasonably Sensitive	47%	25	0	0	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	2
One-Sided	28%	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>
		<u>53</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>
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The 3 were users of social networking services, sight-impaired users of SNS, women employed in ICT

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"There are complex and paradoxical interests among **the various parties in the employment relations context**. ... Satisfactory resolution of the employment relations issues requires a recognition of the contradictory pressures and interests among **employers and employees**" (2003)

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"[Use] of the Internet within the workplace has introduced serious new organisational security concerns ... many **employees have been misusing or abusing** their employer-provided connection to the Internet" (1997)

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"[lifetime electronic health records (LEHRs) should be imposed on individuals and] **the collection of [personal health] data from every necessary or available source should be considered as reasonable**" (2015)

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"participants ... admitted looking at 'fitspiration' images altered their perspective of reality despite admitting it's **artificial constructedness**"



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"participants ... admitted looking at 'fitspiration' images altered their perspective of reality despite admitting it's artificial constructedness"

"we seek for a solution to increase **compliance** (also known as **adherence**) of elder patients [i.e.] a **patient correctly follows medical advice**"

# Dubious Ethics

- **Almost all Social Media research** is actively hostile to the interests of individuals, reflecting only the interests of the System Sponsor
- **Some eHealth research** is less focussed on the interests of individuals, and mainly reflects the interests of the System Sponsor, administrators, insurers or public health
- **"Give priority to the public interest,** particularly when designing or implementing new information systems or other designed artefacts" (AIS Code of Research Conduct)

# Implications for Individual Researchers

- (1) **Discover** perspective as an important element of research conception, design, conduct and reporting
- (2) **Deliberate** on the alternative perspectives that are relevant to the context
- (3) **Determine** the perspective(s) to be adopted
- (4) **Declare** the perspective(s) adopted

# Conclusions

- The System Sponsor perspective **dominates**
- Human Perspectives, the Social Dimension, and the Environmental Dimension are **inadequately represented** in Bled papers
- There is far too little **dual-perspective research**, reflecting both system-sponsor and user views, and inter-relating them, to the benefit of both
- **Multi-perspective approaches and public policy research** are challenging, but represent an opportunity waiting to be grasped

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## What about Public Policy?

- A matter of regional or national **significance**
- Has **social, economic and environmental aspects**
- Requires **negotiation** of Objectives and Principles
- Steps to achieve the Objectives include:
  - Regulatory Measures
  - Resource Allocation
  - **Conception, articulation and implementation of Programs of Action**
- Depends on multi-organisational **collaboration** across the public, private and voluntary sectors

# Features of Public Policy Research

- **The Driver** is desire to address a **Problem** of an economic, social and / or environmental nature
- **The Purpose** is to devise possible **Solutions**, evaluate them, articulate them, implement them
- The mode is **Normative**, not merely descriptive, explanatory or predictive
- The mind-set is **Instrumentalist**, not Pure (pursue knowledge) or Applied (of a tool)
- **Quality** is essential, whereas Rigour is desirable