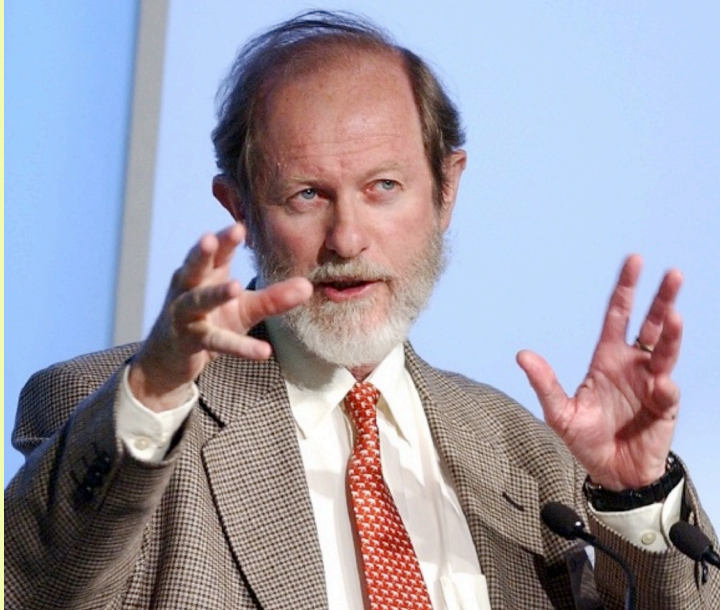


# Public Policy is Within-Scope



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**16 Dec 2015**

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# A Missing Element of Research Design

## 'Perspective'

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

# Perspectives 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		
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		

# What's Public Policy?

- A matter of regional or national significance
- **Has social, economic and environmental aspects**
- Requires negotiated 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 cooperation 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, but Rigour is merely desirable

# Alternative Forms of Research Question

- At a mid-to-high level on the economic dimension:  
*Can {Tesla} disrupt the automotive industry?*

# Alternative Forms of Research Question

- From the system-sponsor perspective:  
*What is the strategic impact on this organisation of { an IS intervention | a disruptive technology }?*
- At a mid-to-high level of the economic dimension:  
*Can {Tesla} disrupt the automotive industry?*



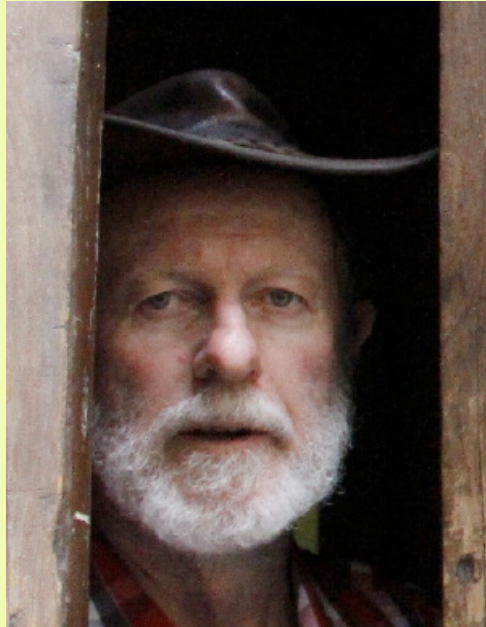
# Alternative Forms of Research Question

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*What facets of the economy, society and the environment can {Tesla, ...} disrupt?*

# Alternative Forms of Research Question

- From the system-sponsor perspective:  
*What are the strategic implications for this organisation of { an IS intervention | a disruptive technology }?*
- At a mid-to-high level of the economic dimension:  
*Can {Tesla} disrupt the automotive industry?*
- Multi-perspective public policy research:  
*What facets of the economy, society and the environment can {Tesla, ...} disrupt?*
- Instrumentalist public policy research:  
*How can an intervention's impacts on all parties be managed, in order to achieve balanced goals?*

# Public Policy is Within-Scope



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# Contentions

- Define **Research Questions** as being within-scope of the IS discipline that are:
  - From Broader Perspectives
  - Instrumentalist in Nature
- Adopt Policy-Oriented **Research Techniques**:
  - Action Research
  - Delphi Rounds
  - Design Science, esp. Participative D.S.
  - Technology Assessment / Impact Assessment
  - Quasi-Empirical Scenario Analysis
- Recover 'Information' and 'System' as **the Disciplinary Core**, not 'the IT artefact'

# Contentions about the Rigour-Relevance Relationship

- A Threshold Level of Rigour is essential
- Relevance is the driver, Rigour is a constraint
- Where more Rigour can be achieved without material compromise to Relevance, it is strongly desirable to do so
- It is rarely justifiable to materially compromise Relevance in order to achieve greater Rigour

One such case: Research whose purpose is to contribute to the discipline and not directly to the real world, e.g. to propose and test improvements in a research technique