

Researcher Perspective(s) and the Role of Perspective in Privacy-Related Research

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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
- ...

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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



Ambrogio Lorenzetti
Annunciation, 1344

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Unit of Study



Organisational Dyad



Organisation



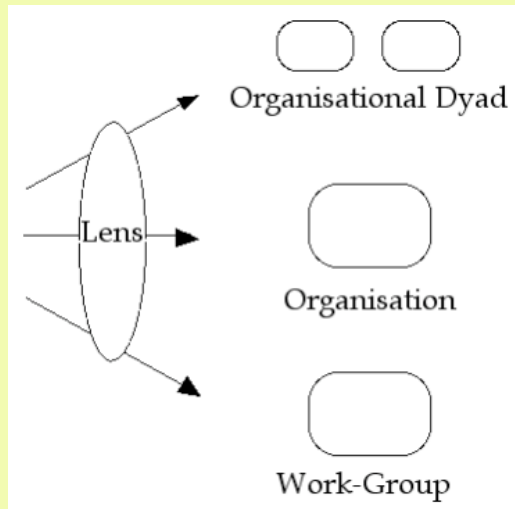
Work-Group

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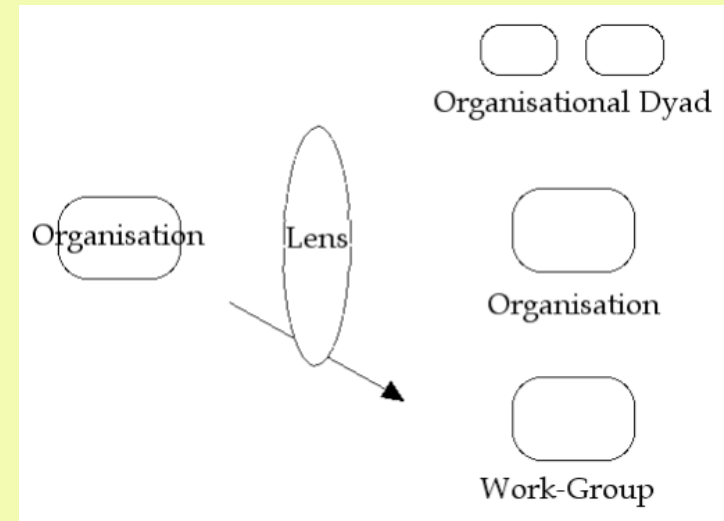
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Unit of Study

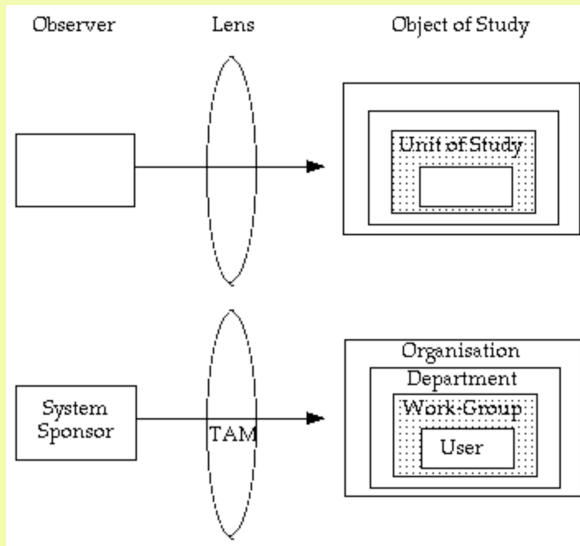


Perspective

Unit of Study



Conceptual Model



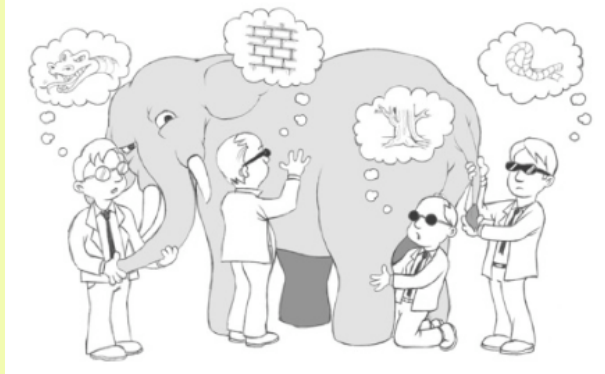
Example

Insights from Interpretivism

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

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S ya d va d a (epistemological relativism)
The Parable of the Blind(folded) Men and the Elephant

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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

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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)

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<teleol*> in AIS eLibrary: >30,000 Entries
1 in Title, 12 in Abstract, 180 in body

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Alternative Perspectives

Triple-Bottom-Line / Corporate Social Responsibility

<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		

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<http://www.rogerclarke.com/SOS/ACIS15.html>

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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		
The System-Sponsor	A Person	A Localised Ecology
Sub-Organisation		

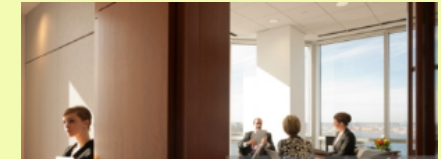
The Dominant Perspective

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- Entities with institutional or market power are recognised as Stakeholders. Their interests are Constraints
- Entities without power are ignored. Their interests surface later, as 'Impediments' and 'Barriers to Adoption'

The Stakeholder Notion

- Freeman & Reed (1983) Calif. Mngt. Rev.:
 - 'entities that have a stake in the system'
- Pouloudi & Whitley (1997) EJIS:
 - participants in the development process &
 - any other entities whose actions can influence or be influenced by development and use of the system directly or indirectly ('Uses')

Sample Research Questions from Published Papers

- How can we use social media to influence people?
- How do we buy-off people's privacy concerns?
- Can we impose lifetime eHealth Records?
- Can we impose pervasive wellbeing monitoring?
- How can we best exploit the crowd?
- How can we de-anonymise the customer?
- Why are people concerned about location sharing?

A Test of the Perspective Notion

Let's stop sending printed invoices through the post

A Test of the Perspective Notion

Let's stop sending printed invoices through the post

Is this a legitimate (M)IS research question?

What will be the impacts on the organisation?

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What will be the impacts on forests?

Single-Perspective Research

The Perspective of the System-Sponsor (S-SS)

- 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?

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A Perspective Other than System-Sponsor (S-O)

- 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 (D)

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

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Multi-Perspective Research (M)

- 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?

Beyond Single-Perspective Research Qns

Let's stop sending printed invoices through the post.

Is this a legitimate (M)IS research question?

What will be the impacts on the organisation?

What will be the impacts along the value-chain?

What will be the impacts on contractors' employees?

What will be the impacts on regional employment?

What will be the impacts on forests?

How can an organisation appreciate and manage the impacts on all parties?

What is 'a feasible and good' design process to reflect the perspectives of all stakeholders?

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'Privacy Concern Reduction'

- Research Question:

How can "institutional privacy assurances such as privacy policies and industry self-regulation ... contribute to reducing individual privacy concerns?"

- Conclusion:

"privacy policies ... are linked to individuals' perceptions of [information handling procedures], which, in turn, can contribute to reducing individual privacy concerns ... and reduce risk perceptions"

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Xu H. et al. (2011) 'Information Privacy Concerns: Linking Individual Perceptions with Institutional Privacy Assurances
Journal of the Association for Information Systems 12, 1

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Alternative RQs

S-SS How can "... privacy policies ... contribute to reducing individual privacy concerns?"

S-O How can a consumer distinguish genuine privacy protections from corporate propaganda?

Do privacy policies reduce privacy risks?

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Xu H. et al. (2011) 'Information Privacy Concerns: Linking Individual Perceptions with Institutional Privacy Assurances
Journal of the Association for Information Systems 12, 1

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Alternative RQs

S-SS How can "... privacy policies ... contribute to reducing individual privacy concerns?"

S-O How can a consumer distinguish genuine privacy protections from corporate propaganda?

Do privacy policies reduce privacy risks?

D What is an appropriate design for personal data markets in order to balance the interests of corporations against those of consumers?

M What corporate behaviours in personal data markets justify regulatory intervention?

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Journal of the Association for Information Systems 12, 1

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Privacy and Personal Data Markets A Research Question

- What is an appropriate design for "a market where buyers can access ... private data by appropriately compensating the individuals ... according to their privacy attitudes?"
- Interpreted:
How can corporations "minimize the price" that "buyers pay" consumers for access to their data?

Alternative RQs

- S-SS How can corporations "minimize the price" that "buyers pay" consumers for access to their data?
- S-O How can willing consumers maximise the price that corporations pay for access to their data?
How can refusenik consumers resist or subvert corporate expropriation of their data?

Alternative RQs

- S-SS How can corporations "minimize the price" that "buyers pay" consumers for access to their data?
- S-O How can willing consumers maximise the price that corporations pay for access to their data?
How can refusenik consumers resist or subvert corporate expropriation of their data?
- D What is an appropriate design for personal data markets that balances the interests of corporations against those of willing and refusenik consumers?
- M What corporate behaviours in personal data markets justify regulatory intervention?

Contexts of Applicability

- **Single-Perspective:**
 - **That of the System-Sponsor:**
Where no other stakeholder has any power
 - **That of another Stakeholder:**
Where that Stakeholder has power
- **Dual-Perspective:**
In situations of competition or interest conflict
- **Multi-Perspective:**
Where there are many (influential) stakeholders
Public policy research

Public Policy Research

- 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 (PPR)

- PPR's Driver is desire to address a Problem of an economic, social and/or environmental nature
- PPR's Purpose is to devise possible Solutions, evaluate them, articulate them, implement them
- PPR's mode is **at least partly Normative**, not merely Descriptive, Explanatory or Predictive
- PPR's mind-set is **Instrumentalist**, not Pure (pursue knowledge) or Applied (of a tool)
- PPR's nature is **inherently Multi-Perspective**
- Outcome Quality is the objective
Research Rigour is a constraint

Researcher Perspective(s) and the Role of Perspective in Privacy-Related Research

Agenda

- Researcher Perspective
- The Dominant Perspective – the System-Sponsor
- The Concept of Stakeholder
- Single-, Dual-, and Multiple Perspectives
- Contexts of Applicability
- Research with Public Policy Relevance
- Implications for Researchers

Conclusions

- Researcher Perspective is **important, overlooked**
- The **System Sponsor perspective dominates**
- Human Perspectives on the Economic dimension, and Social and Environmental Dimensions, are inadequately represented
- **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

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

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