Action Research, Design Science, and Participatory Design:
Three Approaches in Collaborative IS Projects & IS Publications
Claudia Loebbecke
Department of Business, Media and Technology Management
University of Cologne, Germany
claudia.loebbecke@uni-koeln.de
www.mtm.uni-koeln.de

Me (beyond my bio abstract)
- Degrees in Business (PhD and MBA) with IS as a major
- My first IS course in Bloomington, Indiana, US:
  Taught by a Tunesien … ,
  Professor Tawfik Jelassi, ENPC, Paris
- My first job in IS: Working for a Tunesien – at INSEAD in France
- My last PhD consortium – teaming up with a Tunesien

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- My first job in IS: Working for a Tunesien – at INSEAD in France
- Since then: Focus on Strategic IS Issues
  organizational issues &IS, knowledge mgmt (under coopetition),
  and recently the 'IS community' … , see most of today's talk
- Gratefully & persistently 'joined' the AIS community
  www.aisnet.org,
  read papers / books by their 'big shots',
  going to conferences – make friends and get inspired and motivated

European Conference on IS (ECIS)
- 2009 in Verona, Italy -
www.ecis2009.it
June 8 – 10, 2009
Paper deadline: November 15, … November 30
Master of the Ceremony
Antonio Cordella !

International Conference on IS (ICIS)
- 2008 in Paris, France -
www.icis2008.org
Come and let's have fun together again
December 10 – 13, 2008
San Servolo ?
The island with the hospital for the crazy people...

San Servolo !

MCIS in Venice as Starting Point ?!
Action Research (AR)
Participatory Design (PD)
Design Sciences (DS)
Introductory Thoughts

- Similar topics in seemingly different journals and conferences
- Personal: Not enough time / money to read and attend
- Frustration I: colleagues / friends claiming to do things that hardly anyone else does
- Personal: Not aware of literature which is basic to other groups

Research Interest

- Field of Information Systems (IS): many projects done 'in the real world' --- applied IS (?)
- Investigating IS projects (accessible only internationally published ones)
- Focusing on projects referring to three 'methods': Action Research, Design Science, and Participatory Design
- Text analysis of publications for IS projects investigating whether the projects have been clearly tied to one approach

Do projects published being based on one approach also meet characteristics of other two approaches?

And, if yes (or no), what could that mean?

Characteristics of Collaborative IS Research Approaches

- Collaborative
- Interesting ...
- Relevant ...
- Useful ...

Publications for Text Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Authors (year)</th>
<th>MISO</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lindgren et al. (‘04)</td>
<td>MISO</td>
<td>Design principles for Competence Management Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calhoun et al. (‘03)</td>
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<td>Valdes (‘97)</td>
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<td>Cusack-Hare (‘92)</td>
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<td>Peffers et al. (‘06)</td>
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<td>The Design Science Research Process: A Model for Producing and Practicing Information Systems Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miller et al. (‘96)</td>
<td>DESRIST</td>
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<td>Haynes (‘06)</td>
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<td>The Design Science Research Process: A Model for Producing and Practicing Information Systems Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seneviratne, Gage, (‘06)</td>
<td>DESRIST</td>
<td>The Design Science Research Process: A Model for Producing and Practicing Information Systems Research</td>
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Example Text Analysis: DS Project - Markus et al. (2002)

- Objective: Action Research (AR) Design Science (DS) Participatory Design (PD)
- Form: Change of (social) system, organizational dev., user empowerment
- Selected Core References: Markus et al. (2002) / DS: Design Science Research Process
- Determining Change/Design Req.: Phased, continuous, iterative
- Research Process: Phased, continuous, iterative
Process Involvement

**Example Text Analysis:**

*DS Project - Markus et al. (2002)*

- **Objective:**
  - "(…) team repeatedly intervened into the organizational design activities of the involved companies, deploying prototypes that tested various assumptions about how organizational work is done, observing how users responded and iterating." p. 188

- **Focus:**
  - Theoretical Grounds
  - Learning Approach
  - Org. Members’ Involvement
  - Determining Change/Design Req.

- **Selected Core References:**
  - Greenbaum and Kyng (1991)

- **Research Process:**
  - Particip. Design (PD)

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**Discussion**

*Similar (Research) Projects*

Different Publications / Communities / Ways of Appreciation

Is this the Diversity, ‘we’ think to have, claim to have, want to have?

Who is ‘we’? The ‘main streamers’ …? - OXymorons …

Mainly diversity in labels, limited diversity in work!

Academic Breadth or ‘Re-inventing the Wheel’?
Discussion

No sufficient evidence of specialization
Protagonists in specific arenas, refraining from participating in other communities
Little kingdoms
Redundancy – economically and in terms of ‘doing good to the world’ questionable

Driver for knowledge creation
More scientific publication outlets with pubs being/becoming scientist’s ‘currency’
Chance for shaping personal profiles, supporting careers, protagonist positions for newcomers
Growing specialization

Softening the Argument (a Bit)

We all enjoy diversity in people, groups, research incentives, topics, and approaches

and we think the diversity SHOULD continue

BUT

that is easily said if one is a ‘main stream’ / ‘main community’ player

Take Away

• Diversity ☺ - mainly in labels, limited in projects and work! [Sources: ‘Research’ and personal (fun!) experience
• Bad news: Ignorance and redundancy ☹ Blame on senior researchers, editors etc
• Good news: Many, many opportunities to find a niche ☺ Opportunity for junior (and senior) researchers
• Recommendation / ToDo:
  - Be aware!
  - Do not insist on your background / community
  - Appreciate authors / references beyond ‘your group’
  - Mix and mingle, read and MEET – à propos

À Propos — … MEET

ICIS in Dec. 2008
in Paris
www.icis2008.org
Via the AIS
www.aisnet.org
MCIS 2008
in Hammamet
www.mcis2008.org
MCIS 2009++
in the Mediterranean Union
www.ecis2009.it
Paper Deadline:
Nov 30

Action Research, Design Science, and Participatory Design: Three Approaches in Collaborative IS Projects & IS Publications

Traditionally stressing the argument of relevance in the ‘rigor versus relevance’ debate, Action Research (AR), Design Science (DS), and Participatory Design (PD) have been applied successfully in collaborative Information Systems (IS) projects. The presentation outlines the characteristics of the three methods along their research contribution, roots, and methodological guidelines and - based on text analysis - explores similarities and differences of selected IS projects, each prominently published under one of those methods, often in method-specific publication outlets. The presentation postulates that many collaborative IS research projects, seemingly based on different methods, demonstrate remarkable similarities concerning research contribution, roots, and methodological guidelines. Thereupon, the presentation discusses implications for IS research communities. It points to opportunities when aiming at academic publications while facing the challenge of doing research ‘relevant’ to practice. Finally, the presentation purposefully stimulates an open discussion and looks forward to provocative counter-arguments from the audience.

…. Questions, Comments, Complaints ?

Thanks for your attention!

claudia.loebbecke@uni-koeln.de