The Missing Links

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SDI Research Challenges


- Definition and conceptualization
- Models
- Standards
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Balancing technical and social
- Politics and policy
- Culture
- Multi/interdisciplinary approach
Mind (Bridge) The Gap

• Between disciplines
• Between SDI, II, GIS & ICT
• Between theory and practice
• Between technical and social
• Between SDI and users
• Other…
Between disciplines: **new truly (!) interdisciplinary frameworks**
Between SDI, II, GIS & ICT: installing, embedding, supporting

Between theory and practice: link academic research and applications

- Closing the loop – we learn from theory and practice – need to advance both
- Use of research? How?
- Translation of research into pragmatic frameworks, guidelines, models, learning modules, awareness-raising activities, ...
- Early involvement of end beneficiaries – link during the research process
- Who is responsible?
Between technical and social: fully socio-technical

• Balancing act?
• Actor Network Theory (ANT) – focus on relations, undoing artificial boundaries; inscription of ideas into technological processes
• Learning
Between SDI and users: generic SDI vs emphasis on the user perspective

• Focus: SDI use and users
• Usability -- general intelligibility of systems, particularly at the interface; usefulness -- a system’s functionality actually makes sense and adds value in relation to a particular work setting (Blomberg et. al. 1994)
• Effective use -- capacity and opportunity to successfully integrate technologies to achieve the users’ self- or collaboratively-defined goals (Gurstein 2003)
• Utility -- “a measure of the relative satisfaction from or desirability of consumption of goods” (Wikipedia) or as “the quality of being of practical use” (Google)
• Passive vs active users, innovators, “sensemakers”, “domesticators”; appropriation of technology and construction of meaning by its situated use
• Two way infrastructure
• Double-loop learning (more than feedback) – Argyris (1976, 1999)
• Bottom-up, user-driven SDI
• Target users
Other…

Conclusion: paying (or not) attention to gaps bridging them