
What is a ‘Wicked Problem’ for IS?

Rob Gleasure.

Business Information Systems, University College Cork.

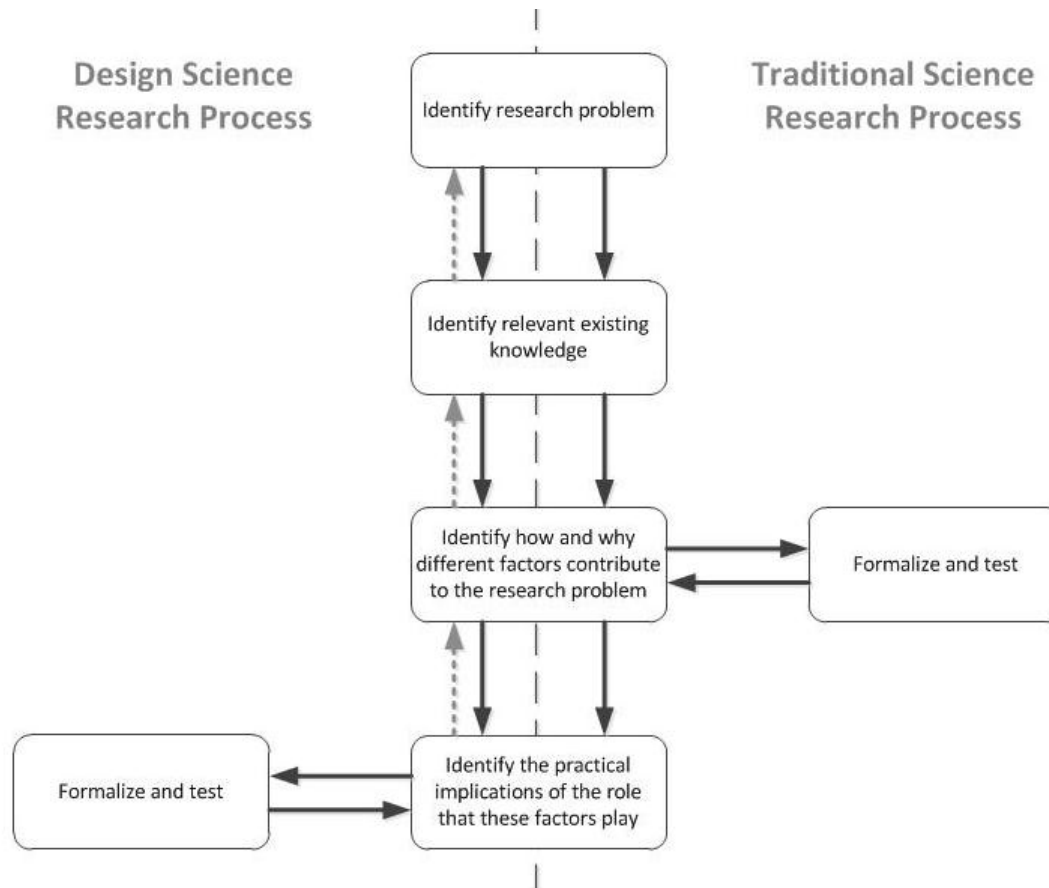
Overview

- A pragmatic approach to the concept of wicked problems
 - Comparing Design Science Research (DSR) and traditional approaches
 - Designing when the prescriptive aspect of a research problem is less mature than its descriptive or normative dimensions
 - Designing when causal factors impacting upon the problem variable are difficult to identify and/or isolate with traditional empirical approaches
 - Designing when mediating influences and interactions between causal factors impacting upon the problem variable are difficult to identify and/or isolate with traditional empirical approaches
 - Conclusions and future research
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A pragmatic approach to the concept of wicked problems

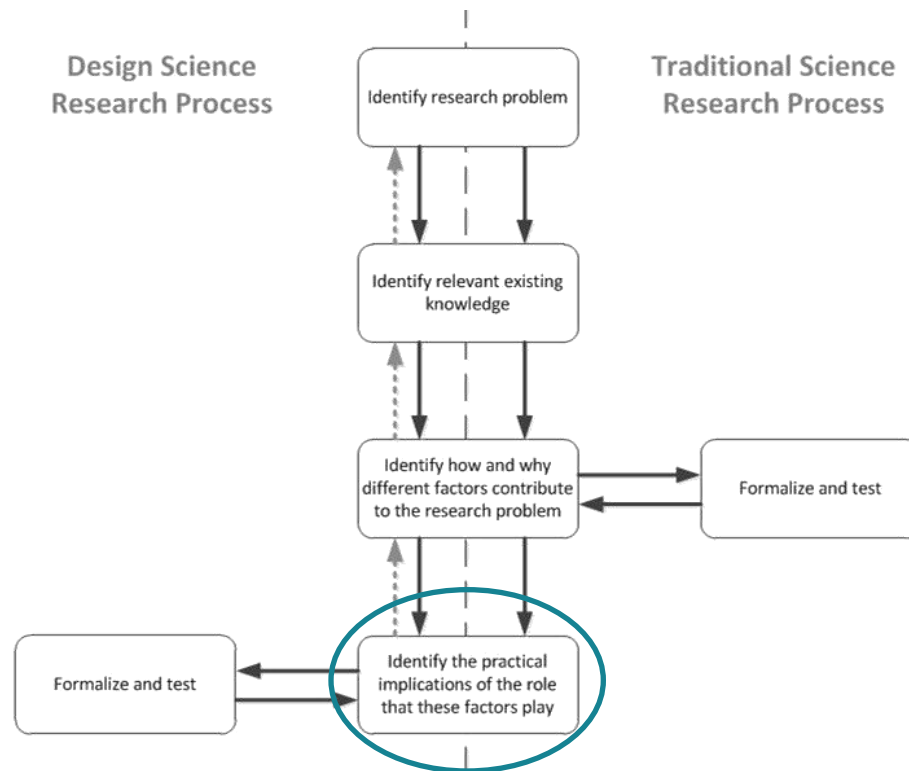
- Decades of discussion on wicked problems vs. tame problems
 - Used to demonstrate complexity of real-world problems
 - Used to argue for design-oriented approaches
 - This study explores the second, .i.e. wicked problems are defined as the ‘research problems for which a DSR approach is suitable’
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Comparing DSR and traditional empirical approaches



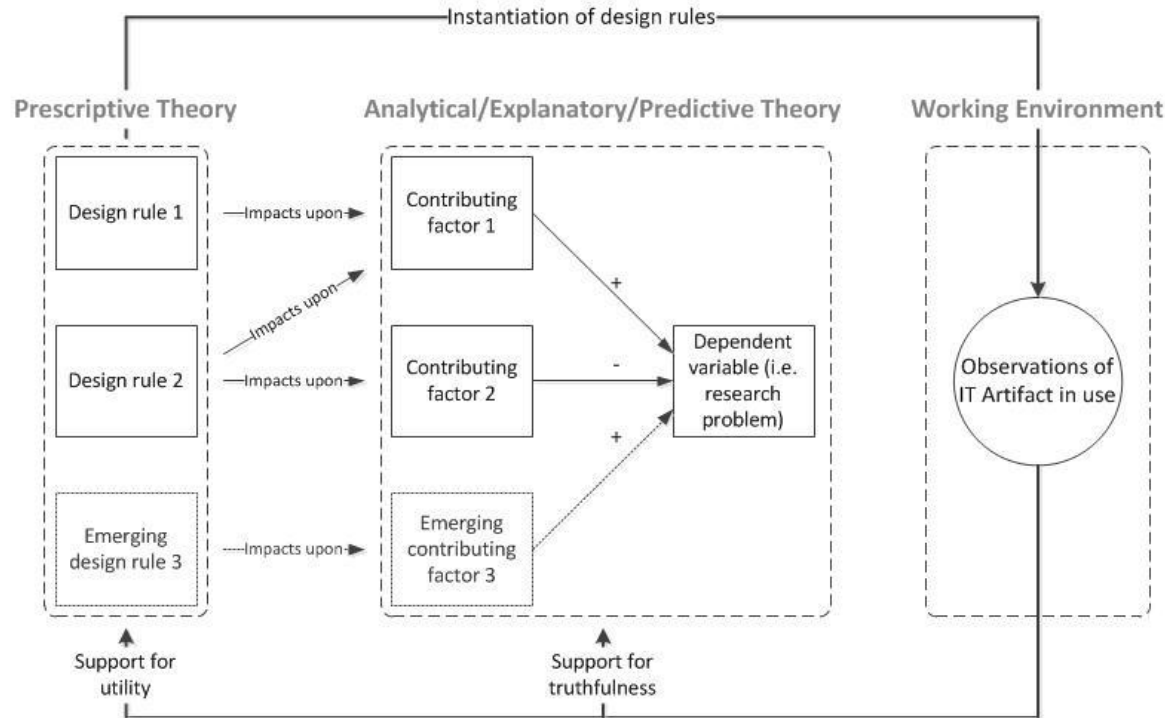
Guideline #1

- Designing when the prescriptive aspect of a research problem is less mature than its descriptive or normative dimensions



Guideline #2

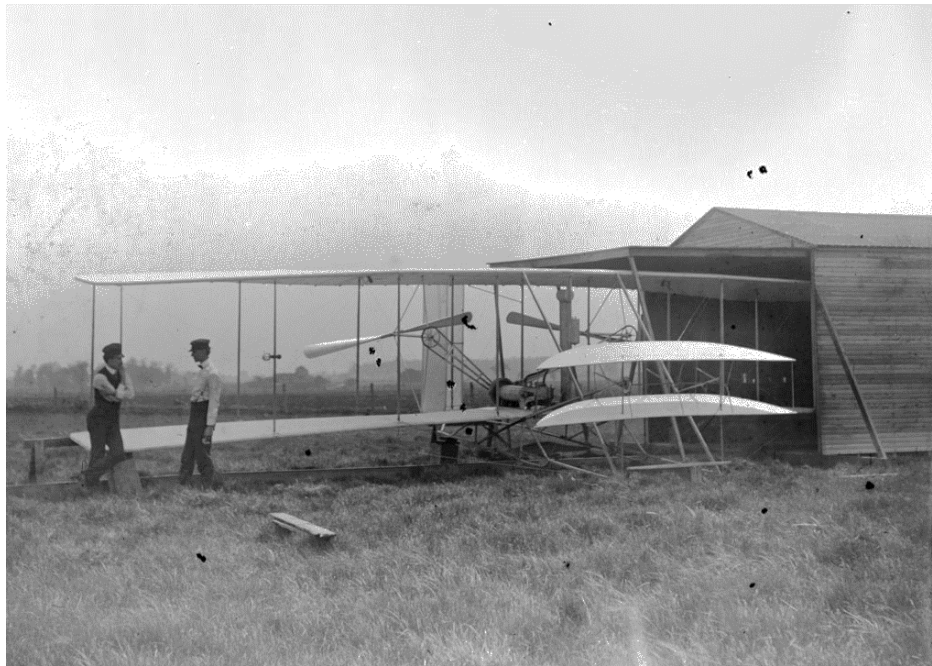
- Designing when causal factors impacting upon the problem variable are difficult to identify and/or isolate with traditional empirical approaches



E.g. Markus et al. 2002

Guideline #3

- Designing when mediating influences and interactions between causal factors impacting upon the problem variable are difficult to identify and/or isolate with traditional empirical approaches



Conclusions and future research

- Contributions
 - Distinction clarified between DSR and traditional empirical approaches
 - Three types of ‘wicked problem’ identified for IS researchers for which DSR is suitable
 - Future research
 - Opportunity for empirical investigation of which of these characteristics of research problems regularly influence the adoption of DSR approaches in practice
 - Opportunity for empirical investigation of other characteristics of research problems that influence the adoption of DSR approaches in practice
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