IMPROVING COMMUNICATION FOR COLLABORATION IN SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECTS - A FRAMEWORK FOR PRAGMATIC RESEARCH

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Motivation

• Part I: General lack of attention to space and boundaries in IS
  • Cf. Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action

• Part II: Lack of structuring support for social innovation projects
  • Many conversations, many tools
  • The need for collaboration patterns
  • Pragmatic Research approach
Overview

- Habermas’ theory of communicative action
- Sloterdijk: towards TCA 2.0
- Implications for design and architecture (i.e., boundary spanning)
Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action

- Coordination by shared understanding
- Validity claims based on a distinction between object world, subject world and social world
- Discourse ethics / universal pragmatics
- Critical perspective: modern tension between life world and system world
Some critical remarks

• Embodiment
• Boundedness
• Text and materiality

Towards TCA 2.0
Spheres (Sloterdijk)

- Being is being-in-the-world, so always localized in time and space
- What does it mean to be “in” some place? It always means being inside some sphere, (some atmo-sphere)
- Being inside some sphere is first of all a bodily presence, influenced by the air, smells, and the mimetic influence of other bodies (imitation)
Sphere as design

- The sphere is the object of careful design ("Dasein is design") – e.g. a cosmonaut suit.
- The first design objective is safety/protection.
- For identity protection, not only the physical arrangement is important (walls, locks; personal flavour), but also communication.
- Two kinds of communicative action:
  - Verständigung (agreement) between sphere inhabitants over against the external world (speech)
  - Translation: crossing sphere boundaries (text)
Implications for IS design

• Design of local spheres
  – Rational and bodily discourse
  – More attention to the role of the outer space: uplinking, downlinking (Taylor)

• Design of sphere network (architecture)
  – Connection via boundary objects (text,..)
  – Connection via boundary spanners (actors)
Some basic rules

• Inter-spheres should stimulate either the creation or the exchange of boundary objects and provide them with a global identity.

• Inter-spheres should contain actors that are also a member of other spheres - boundary spanners - and provide them with a clear role (in the case of exchange, possible roles are importing and exporting).
Sphere types

- Public inter-sphere exchange
- Closed inter-sphere production
- Private sphere reproduction
Social Innovation Collaboration model
(De Moor 2012)
Example collaboration pattern

Communication pattern: Developer Conversation

Developer_Conversation → object → Execute → agent → Developer

input → Content → part → Community_Portal

link → Deep_Link

Information pattern: Linked Content

input → Social_Media

Communication pattern: Stakeholder Conversation

Stakeholder_Conversation → object → Execute → agent → Stakeholder
innovation practices

collaboration patterns (descriptive)

collaboration patterns (prescriptive)

root ontology

communicative norms (TCA 2.0)

Framework for developing collaboration patterns
Conclusions

• Communication in bounded space
• Communication for collaboration – the need to develop patterns recognizing these bounds
• Development of collaboration patterns via a pragmatic research framework

• Question: what about Inter-net?