UKAIS Doctoral Consortium
2003: PhD Process Views

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Views

• Research Context

• Doctoral Education

• Research Problems or Areas of Concern

• Originality

• Ongoing Proposals
View 1: Research Context- Keeping Our Ps and Qs

Quality: Papers in Top Journals

Quality: Pounds from Research Grants To Fund Projects

Quality: Presence of Staff by External Recognition

Quality: People Carrying out Research Projects

Quality: PhDs Graduated
View 2: Perspectives on Doctoral Education

THE 'EMERGENT' APPROACH
- The changing nature of Higher Education in the UK
- Concern over the low completion rates for doctoral degrees
- The role of the supervisor
- Individualism and self-reliance

THE 'DOCTORAL SCHOOL' APPROACH
- 'Management' of research activities
- ESRC and EPSRC guidelines
- Prominent in USA
- More popular in the UK at Salford, LSE, Brunel...
Key Problems with the UK Emergent Approach

- Changes in research direction
- Isolation and lack of social support
- Dependence on the supervisor; wide range of skills involved in supervisory role
- Inapplicability of research findings
- Lack of knowledge of research methods
Old Joke-the power of the supervisor

A fox, walking through a wood, sees a rabbit. He is about to pounce, when he notices that the rabbit appears to be writing. The fox presents himself and asks the rabbit what he is doing. “I’m writing my thesis”, the rabbit replies. Astounded, the fox asks the subject. “It’s about rabbits eating foxes.” The fox begins to laugh, and so the rabbit invites him into a nearby cave for demonstration. Meanwhile, a wolf has been watching this, and is surprised to see the rabbit emerge from the cave, with no sign of the fox. The wolf then presents himself, and asks the rabbit if he thinks he can eat a wolf. “I’m sure I can manage that.” answers the rabbit. As the wolf approaches the cave he sees a shadow in the corner. “What’s that?” he asks, and the rabbit replies, “Oh, that’s the lion, he’s my supervisor.
Salford and UniSA Doctoral School

Manchester established in 1993, Adelaide 1999

Graduated ~60 research students

Popular within UK and Internationally

Strong international links

Moving to Supervisory cells with the Principal Supervisor chosen after the full proposal
Doctoral School Course First Year Structure

Information Systems Foundations
- Systems and Inquiry
- Paradigms of Information Systems Research and Practice
- IS Ethics

Research Topics
- IS Methodology and Evolution
- Enterprise Systems
- Electronic Government
- Critical Issues

Research Methods/ Research Proposal Preparation
- Empirical Studies
- Interpretative
- Case/Action based
- Proposal exemplars

Academic Discourse
- Research Proposals
- PhD Theses
- Research Papers
- Research Grant Proposals
View 3: Research Problem/Area of Concern (from Peter Keen, ECIS 1998)

CONCERNS
CLASSICAL SITUATIONAL IMMEDIATE

CLEARING
ANTICIPATION
GROUNDING
NEW PRACTICES
STANDARD PRACTICES
ACCOUNTING

The **BODY** of knowledge
Classical Areas of Concern (from Peter Keen 1998)

- Evaluating the benefits from investment in IT infrastructure
- The Systems Development and Evolution Process
- Social impact of new and novel Information technologies and applications
- Impact on organisational roles
Situational Areas of Concern (from Peter Keen 1998)

- Methodological Development and Assessment
- Business on the World Wide Web
- Business-to-business electronic commerce
- Virtual Organisations
Immediate Areas of Concern

- Salford Virtual Chamber of Commerce (16 PhD Students)
- EDI for path lab results for GPs
- Electronic Government in Malaysia
- INTERNET Issues
View 4: Originality

• Saying something nobody has said before.

• Carrying out empirical work that has not been done before.

• Making a synthesis of things that have not been put together before.

• Making a new interpretation of someone else’s material or ideas

• Taking a new technique and applying it to a new area.

• Being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies.
Originality

• Looking at topics that people in Information Systems have not looked at before.

• Testing existing knowledge in an original way.

• Writing down a new piece of information for the first time.

• Continuing a previously original piece of work.

• Carrying out original work designed by the supervisor.

• Bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue.
"What is to be done?"

"Why should it be done?"

"What else has been done?"

"How is it to be done?"

"How is the research project to be monitored and controlled?"

"What is the research likely to lead to?"

"How will you know when the research is finished?"
### Proposal Areas

1. A rigorously defensible statement of the identified research issue or problem.

2. A defence of the importance of the research.

3. A review of significant prior research.

4. A critical review of the chosen research methods.

5. Research plan covering set timescale.

6. A critical review of the potential outcomes of the research.

7. A statement justifying the independence of the research