e-Research: A Social Informatics Perspective

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1:30-3:00 pm on Friday, October 31, 2008
Indiana University Bloomington, Herman B. Wells Library, Room LI 001

Refreshments will be available prior to the talk at 1:15 pm.

ABSTRACT

e-Research, which is broadly defined to include distributed and collaborative ICT-enabled research practices across the physical and computational sciences, social sciences, and humanities is an active area of research and funding around the world. However, given the early stages of development of many e-Research projects, we know relatively little about their use and impact on actual research practices and outcomes. Lacking solid evidence, there is a general perception that the social science community in particular lacks a sufficient level of awareness of e-Research, and that this has contributed to a low take-up of advances in ICTs as tools for social research. This talk presents the results of several studies, including surveys and case studies, designed to understand research practices and awareness of e-Research, funding patterns and scholarly publication related to e-Research, and social issues arising from particular e-Research projects. Meyer concludes with a discussion about what social informatics (SI) offers for enhancing our understanding of e-Research. He will argue that employing a balanced view of the relationship between the social and the technical such as that offered by SI can help to understand broader patterns between technological configurations, human actors, resource flows, and the choices that are made about the design and implementation of e-Research technologies.

Links to Working Papers

- Survey data: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1262211
- Case study data: http://www.ischools.org/oc/conference08/papers/PA10-2_iconf08.pdf
- Scholarly communication data: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1262213

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eric T. Meyer is a Research Fellow on the faculty of the Oxford Internet Institute, a department of the University of Oxford. He is a research officer on the Oxford e-Social Science (OeSS) project, which is currently entering its second three-year funding period and focuses on understanding the social, ethical and legal implications of e-Research and identifying ways in which barriers in these areas have been overcome. He is also the principal investigator on two e-
Humanities projects. The World Wide Web of Humanities project is a transatlantic partnership with the Internet Archive that uses test collections on WWI and WWII to create general purpose tools for building and researching web collections. The Toolkit for the Impact of Digital Scholarly Resources is designed to identify best practices for funding agencies and archives to measure and maximize the scholarly impact of digitized humanities collections. Meyer is the 2006 recipient of the Rob Kling fellowship awarded by the School of Library and Information Science for outstanding work in Social Informatics by a doctoral student. He earned his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 2007. His dissertation on the changing practices of marine biologists who switched from film to digital photography in their work identifying whales and dolphins was named the 2008 ProQuest Doctoral Dissertation of the Year. More information is available on his website: http://people.oii.ox.ac.uk/meyer.