

Lightning Paper Abstract

Visualizing Domain Coherence: Social Informatics as a Case Study

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Using bibliometric methods of inquiry, one of the eleven approaches of domain-analytic research offered by Hjørland (2002), we were able to visualize the emerging field of social informatics (SI). Past research has demonstrated the breadth and depth of bibliometric tools by investigating a variety of research communities (White and Griffith 1981; Tsay 1989; McCain 1991; Borgman and Rice 1992; White and McCain 1998; Smiraglia 2006, 2009, Moore 2007; Jank 2010). Using the published literature produced in SI from 1997 through 2009, allowed visualization of domain-coherence in SI. Concepts that were utilized by which to measure domain coherence include the number of ideas espoused (Collins 1998, 42), scholarly productivity (Crane 1972), and the number of scholars participating (Price 1986; Collins 1998). In this lightning paper based on a recent dissertation (Hoeffner 2012) we will present a visualization based on the analysis of social informatics' literature, showing growth in publication productivity, evidence of intellectually and socially connected scholars, reliance on scholars from within the fields of information science, and computer science, and two or three topical areas of interest that pertained to communication and aspects of computer mediation, as well as policy and access. Discourse among scholars was evident, and although the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology* overwhelmingly published the largest number of SI work, there was representation in a few key journals. Author co-citation patterns revealed a core group of scholars commonly cited together, and an investigation of self-citation practices revealed slightly less evidence among SI's most prolific authors than in science overall. Recently, Smiraglia (2012) defined a domain as "a domain is a group with an ontological base that reveals an underlying teleology, a set of common hypotheses, epistemological consensus on methodological approaches, and social semantics." Our visualization demonstrates continued coherence of SI as a domain.

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