

# Exploring the Social Studies of Information

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# Welcome

- Thanks for choosing this workshop
- Participants from
  - USA, Nigeria, Finland, Croatia, the UK, Serbia, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Portugal, Spain, and Italy.

# iSchool Identities

- Disciplinary scope of most iSchools is intentionally broad
- Chronic issue of intellectual coherence
  - Where you work vs. who you are
- Fragmentation into small camps on various axes
  - Disciplinary background
  - Functional specialization
    - LIS traditional splits – info seeking vs. info retrieval, etc.
    - Topics of study

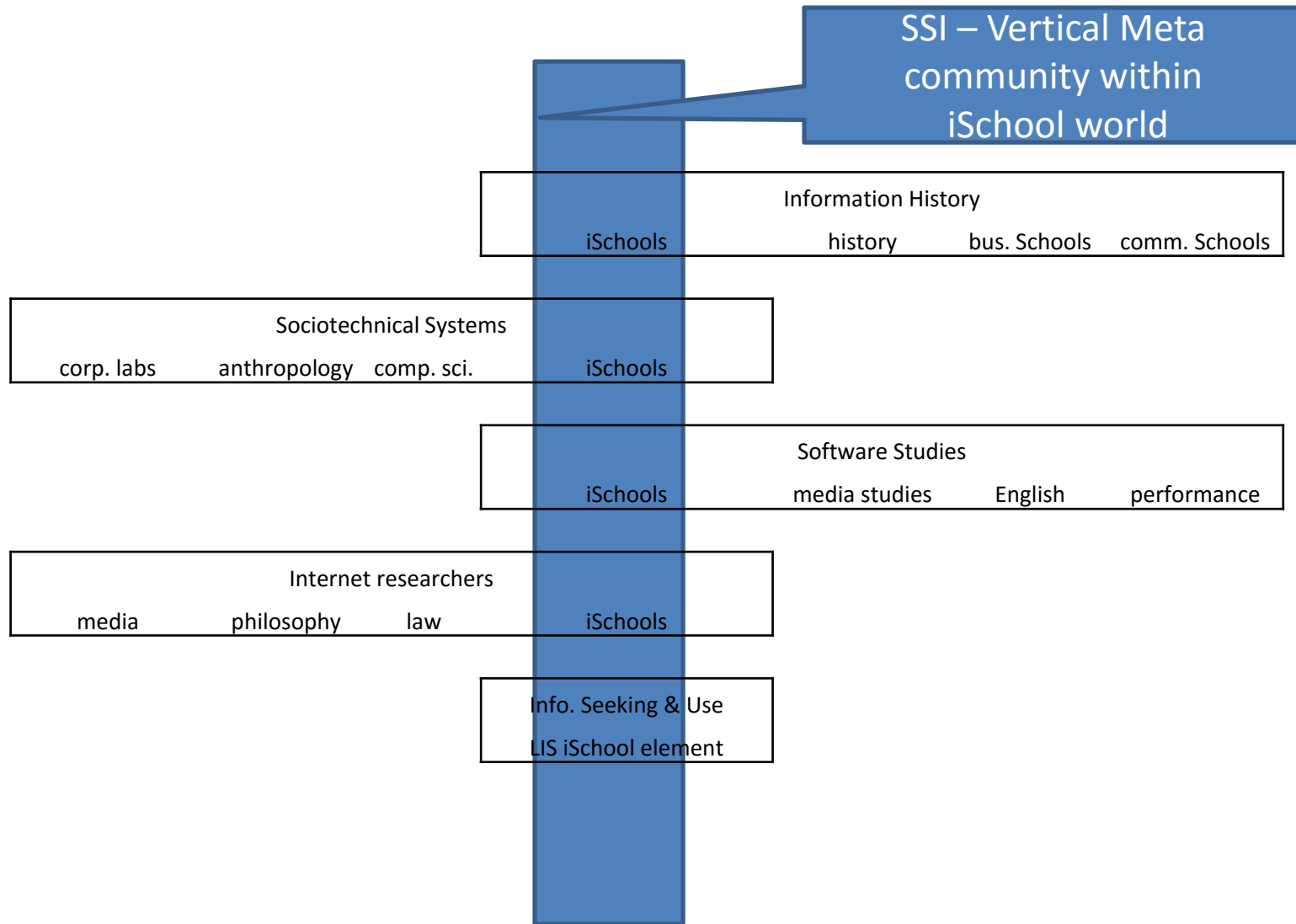
# One Path to SSI

- Tradeoff – scope vs coherence
- My background
  - Computer science
  - History & Sociology of Science
  - School of Information Studies
  - History of Information Technology (SIGCIS)
- Two personal stories
  - Formation of an SSI research group at UWM
  - Paul Edwards email group

# What We Had In Common

- Background or interest in STS  
(=Science & Technology Studies,  
or Science, Technology & Society)
- Participants at the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S)  
meetings, which are
  - Fast growing,
  - Pluralistic drawing far beyond core STS programs
  - Yet have an identifiable set of core concerns and methods
- No current community encompasses all those with STS  
interests in the iSchool world
- In iSchool context we have gathered around “information”  
rather than “science”
  - Therefore “Social Studies of Information”

# Horizontal vs. Vertical Identities



# What SSI Has So Far

- Web domain [socialstudiesof.info](http://socialstudiesof.info)
- Drupal site with basic content for
  - Directory of participants
  - Syllabus repository
- Listserv
- Twitter account (not very active)
- Facebook page (also not very active)
- This workshop

# Goals of the Workshop

- Provide space for people to come together from full spectrum of potential SSI areas to
  - Learn more about each other
  - Plan out tangible next steps in meta-community building
- Workshop structure reflects this
  - No long talks
  - Lots of interactive discussion in sessions (and breaks)
  - Focus on identifying group perspectives and looking for areas of shared interests



# Structure of the Workshop

- 1: Introduction and framing discussion
- 2: Community discussion
  - Workshop wide fishbowl session
  - How SSI can support and benefit from individuals
- 3: Breakout sessions focused on existing communities
  - How SSI can support and benefit from communities
- Conclusions and further steps
  - Joint with CSST workshop
  - Identify specific meta community building initiatives and put people's names next to them

# Questions

- Is there significant common ground between these various communities?
- Is SSI a suitable banner under which to institutionalize connections?
- What tangible things can we do over the next year to bring people together?
  - Website?
  - Social media?
  - Working groups?
  - Another workshop next year?
  - Governance structure?