

From Induction to Abduction: a new approach to research and productive enquiry

Dave Snowden,

Founder & Chief Scientific Officer Cognitive Edge Pte Ltd

This seminar will provide a summary of both the theory and practice of a new approach to research based on the large scale capture of self-interpreted micro-narrative. The approach has been described as the first technique for distributed ethnography and has been developed over the past decade with project based funding from the US, UK and Singapore Governments in the context of risk assessment, horizon scanning, cultural mapping and weak signal detection. It allows the linkage of research with knowledge management and impact based measurement. Current projects involve measuring the impact of development projects in Africa, narrative based knowledge management for the US Army in Afghanistan and cultural mapping of various inner city communities within the UK.

The theoretical origins lie in the application of complex adaptive systems theory to social systems together with new understanding about the nature of human decision making from the cognitive sciences. The seminar will summarise the theory, but will also use a series of projects to combine theory with practice. One of the goals is to create learning systems that work on continuous capture of material *in the field as it happens* linked with a capacity for feedback loops and sophisticated representations that allow people to learn by doing, building on the micro-narratives of day to day experience. Narrative forms of knowledge lie between the experiential and the symbolic, allowing complex interactions and interventions in multiple social situations.

The seminar will appeal to anyone working in social science research, experimental philosophy, ethnography and management science.

There are 30 places available on a first come first served basis. Please let Susan Wood know if you would like to reserve a place scepter@surrey.ac.uk.

For a video introduction to Dave's work visit:

<http://learningtobeprofessional.pbworks.com/From-induction-to-abduction%2C-a-new-approach-to-research-and-productive-inquiry>



Dave Snowden has been one of the leading figures in the movement towards integration of humanistic approaches to knowledge management with appropriate technology and process design. Well known for his work on the role of narrative and sense-making, he is an entertaining speaker and a formidable realist, and one of the few thought leaders who can bring together the academic and practitioner perspectives into a single, comprehensible purview.

He is the Founder of the Cynefin Centre for Organizational Complexity which focuses on the development of the theory and practice of social complexity. The Centre spun off from IBM in July 2005 to allow it greater freedom to explore new transdisciplinary and participatory approaches to research and the creation of an open source approach to management consultancy. The Cynefin framework which lies at the heart of the approach has been recognized by several commentators as one of the first practical application of complexity theory to management science and builds on earlier pioneering work in Knowledge Management.

A native of Wales, he was formerly a Director in the IBM Institute for Knowledge Management where he led programmes on complexity and narrative. He pioneered the use of narrative as a means of knowledge disclosure and cross-cultural understanding. He is a leading keynote speaker at major conferences around the world and is known for his iconoclastic style, pragmatic cynicism and extensive use of stories to communicate what would otherwise be difficult concepts. Tom Stewart, the new editor of Harvard Business Review in his latest book states in the context of tacit knowledge "Dave Snowden, the best thinker I've found on the subject ..." although by way of counter he also comments "he is Welsh and a bit mad".

Dave Snowden has an MBA from Middlesex University and a BA in Philosophy from Lancaster University. He is adjunct Professor of Knowledge Management at the University of Canberra, an honorary fellow in knowledge management at the University of Warwick, Adjunct Professor at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and MiNE Fellow at the Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore in Italy. He teaches on various university programmes throughout the world. He regularly consults at the board level with some of the world's largest companies as well as to Government and NGOs and was recently appointed as an advisor on sense making to the Singaporean Ministry of Defence.