Week 2: Challenges within Constructive Research

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# Challenges within Constructive Research

Constructive design is one of the most common research methods for information systems and technology (Silvestrini & Sammito, 2012). The methodology revolves around building artifacts, studying outcomes, and then deriving novel observations. During this process, the researcher needs to be cognizant of ethical and quality challenges. When the authors fail to address those risks, their efforts conclude with unacceptable and unused results.

# Ethical Challenges

Ethics are a system of moral principles that dictate the norms of a group. Societies implement these systems through social constructivism, enabling and constraining the group’s actions (Burr, 2015). Communities leverage this mechanism to assign truths and then infer a concept’s value (Gergen, 2010). Consider a project that seeks to prove that men are superior to women. Within a chauvinistic cohort, these results align with their world views and are ethical. However, a diverse group would chastise the very idea, regardless of methodology. Further complicating the matter, ethical identities are dynamic and evolve (or regress) over time.

Researchers need to understand their internal biases, in addition to external audiences. Everyone has historical and cultural defaults that lead to prejudices. These subtle classification differences influence our language, which constructs reality (Owen, 2017). Picture two people, one fat another thin. Then change those definitions to obese and anorexic. Did all four imagined people have the same gender and race? Words matter and one needs to choose them carefully.