

Embedded Epistemology

Critical Information Literacy and Information Systems

John D. Martin III

Discussion Questions

1. What is epistemology, and how does it operate in the context of information systems?
2. What is a social interaction? Where do we find them?
3. Can an information system be social? Why or why not?
4. What are the ways that social exchange (Blau, 1964) can help us understand system interactions?

System interrogation

Each group is assigned a system, interface, or platform to interrogate in the spirit of Eamon Tewell's "resistant reading" (Tewell, 2016) and Edward Tufte's ideas about the fit of tool for task (2011). Ask the following questions about it. Generate some new questions as you try to figure these out.

1. What is the purpose of this system?
2. Who designed it?
3. Who owns it?
4. Who owns the information in it?
5. How was it designed?
6. Where and when was it designed?
7. What features stand out?
8. Why do those features stand out?
9. What other questions can we ask?

References

- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. Transaction Publishers. Retrieved from <https://market.android.com/details?id=book-qhOMLscX-ZYC>
- Tewell, E. (2016). Toward the Resistant Reading of Information: Google, Resistant Spectatorship, and Critical Information Literacy. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 16(2), 289–310. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/613843/summary>
- Tufte, E. R. (2011). *The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within*. Cheshire, Connecticut: Graphics Press. Retrieved from <http://users.ha.uth.gr/tgd/pt0501/09/Tufte.pdf>