

The Meta-Context of Information Behavior: The Importance of Multiple Lenses and Mixed Methods Tension



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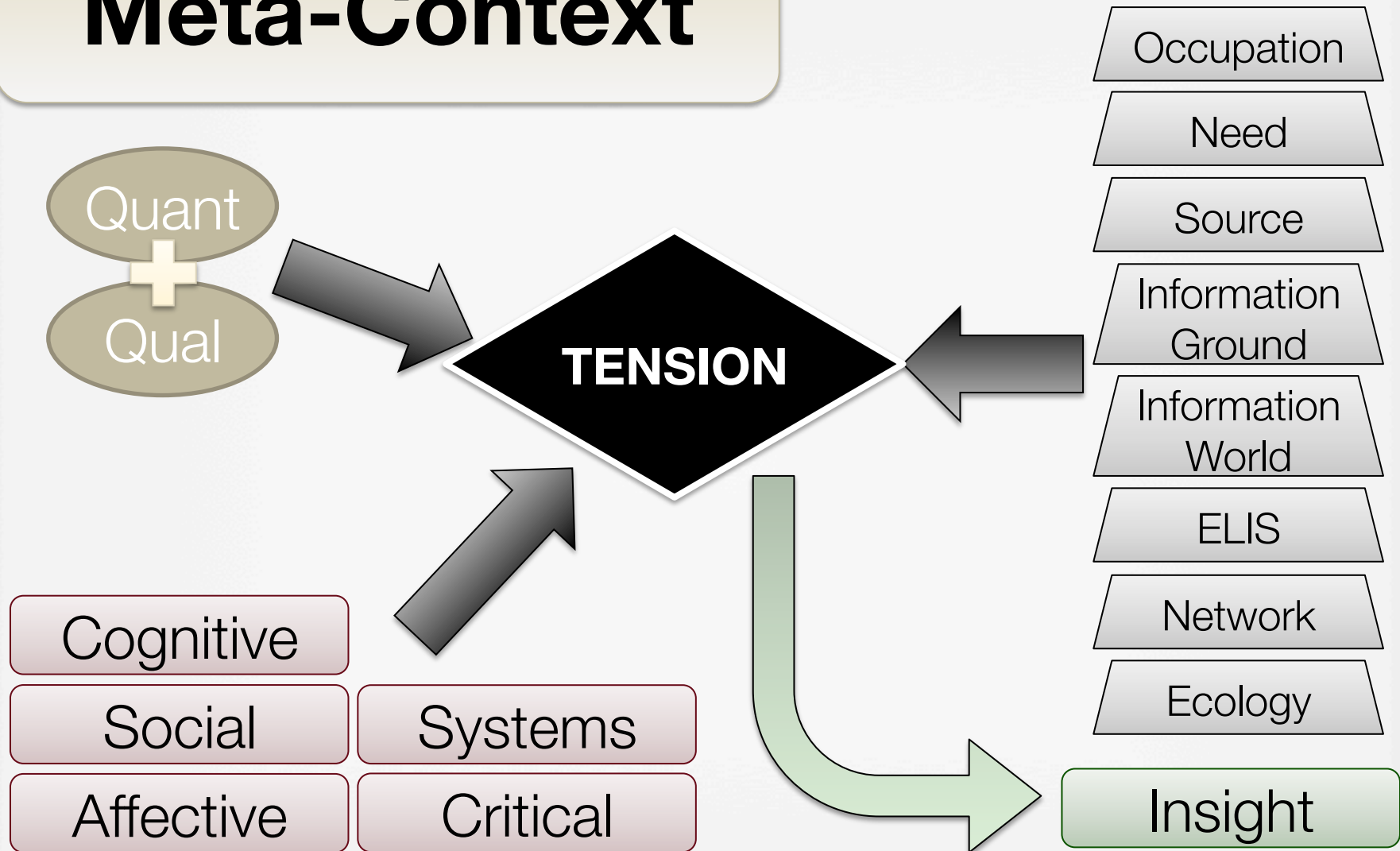
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Meta-Context



Recent Study

- Users of LibraryThing and Goodreads
- Roles played within and across communities

Social

Groups

Site

Tech

Moderators

- Content analysis of messages ($n = 519$)
 - Conventions, practices
 - Information sharing
 - Structure
 - Linking
 - Encouraging activities

Worrall, A. (2014). *The roles of digital libraries as boundary objects within and across social and information worlds* (Doctoral dissertation). Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.

<http://www.adamworrall.org/portfolio/dissertation/>

Recent Study

Individual

Cognitive

Users

Site

Groups

Community

- Survey of users ($n = 142$)
 - Individualized cognitions of behavior
 - Strong, significant role in users' information behavior
- Semi-structured interviews ($n = 11$)
 - Behaviors, needs
 - Use of site, groups
 - Shared (or unshared) social context

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Resolving Tension

- Synthesis of nuances, facets
- Deeper, richer conclusions
- Information behavior plays a clear role, but not always manifest

Structure

“Fit” as boundary object, site for existing behaviors

Technology for full spectrum of features, behaviors

Moderators, key members, technology **establish community structure**

Conflicts when contexts differed enough

Values

Users

Community

Tech

Site

Moderators

Under review

Roles

Social network

“Off-topic,” everyday life information behavior

Connections, ties, sense of community

Community

Network

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Meta-Context

- May be necessary for research purposes
- Very complex under the surface
- “Ethnographic observation & study of artifacts”
- “Questioning of human actors”
(Courtright, 2008, p. 293)
- Should continue in individual research studies and in working together as a field



Insight

Questions or comments?



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