

# **SOCIAL INTERACTION IN AN ONLINE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

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Masters of Commerce Degree in Information Systems

by

Tawona Vanessa Nyirenda

**31 January 2007**

**Supervised by: Dr. Lisa Seymour  
Dr. Dick Ng'ambi (Co-Supervisor)**

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## ABSTRACT

This research study investigated the social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. The research study followed an online conference of researchers from disciplines of social sciences, law, and humanities. The online conference was initiated by the National Research Foundation (NRF) and was hosted by Centre for Educational Technology (CET) at University of Cape Town (UCT). The main aim of the research study is to identify social interaction enablers and inhibitors in an online cross-disciplinary conference.

The Internet is being used for numerous purposes, such as extending one's social networks, participating in online communities, finding a marriage partner, learning, and developing successful business relationships. An online conference uses the Internet for social networking.

The study followed an interpretive research approach and combined critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the social presence indicators template (SPIT) as its analytical framework. The focus of the study was on the analysis and interpretation of the online conference text messages (artefacts) to identify enablers and inhibitors of social interaction.

The social interaction enablers identified in the study included sharing and seeking of information, social presence, time and geographical confidence and flexibility, facilitation, prescribed/relevant topics and increased confidence and reduced evaluation anxiety. Inhibitors of social interaction were lack of community, prescribed topics, minimal activities, lack of non-verbal and social cues and clarity of topics. The social interaction enablers that were not identified in the literature were prescribed/relevant topics and collaboration and lobbying. Lack of community, clarity of topics, prescribed topics and minimal activities were identified as inhibitors of social interaction in the study but were not identified in the literature.

In addition, the research found that some social interaction enablers were also found to be inhibitors. A revelation in the research study was that prescribed topics both enabled and inhibited social interaction. While some participants contributed towards these topics, others did not.

Although the study focused predominantly on a cross-disciplinary research conference the findings reported in this study could have useful applications on online social interaction in general. The study has found out that an online conference arguably has merits over a face-to-face conference, but these benefits can only be optimised when social interaction is deliberately fostered through convergence of the online conference tool, facilitation, and topic design.

**KEYWORDS:** Social interaction, online conference, interpretive, critical discourse analysis, social presence indicators, asynchronous, forums.

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## ACRONYMS

- CDA – Critical discourse analysis
- CET – Centre for Educational Technology
- CMC – Computer-mediated communication
- EIT – Emerging information technologies
- F2F – Face-to-face
- IS – Information Systems
- ISSS 2000 – Information Services in Schools 2000
- NRF – National Research Foundation
- SA – South Africa
- SBK – Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge
- SSDS – Social Decision Support System
- SPIT – Social presence indicator template
- SSLH – Social Science, Law, and Humanities
- TG – Text genre
- DT – Discursive type
- UCT – University of Cape Town

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This research study investigates the social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. The research adopts Curtis & Lawson's (2001) definition of an online conference, which is the use of a web-based application that enables participants to compose and post messages that are stored in an area accessible to group members. These messages are organised into 'threads' of discussions thus, participants can socially interact with one another.

Peris, Gimeno, Pinazo, Ortet, Carrero, Sanchiz, & Ibanez (2002) explain that nowadays, the Internet allows people to communicate in various modes, either synchronously or asynchronously, using text, voice, images, and real-time video. Emerging information technologies (EITs) are increasingly being used in global organisations to enable geographically and temporally separated teams to work as though they are virtually collocated (Nandhakumar & Baskerville, 2001). EITs are changing social interactions; online conferencing is one such application with affordances for sharing information and connecting geographically dispersed people thereby redefining the concept of social interaction.

In a face-to-face (F2F) conference, participants gather at a physical location at specified times while in an online conference participants meet virtually at times convenient to them. The Internet is a medium through which the online conference happens. Connectivity and the asynchronous nature of the medium allows for reduction of space and convenience of time.

Wellman (1997) explains that when a computer network connects people or organisations, it becomes a social network. When the Internet is used as a communication device, one of the surprising properties is that using the Internet becomes a social activity. People like to meet with other people, to discuss, exchange opinions and information on the Internet, with the Internet providing opportunities for the development of new modes of interpersonal relationships (Parks & Floyd, 1996). The Internet is being used for numerous purposes, such as extending one's social networks, participating in online communities, finding a marriage partner, learning, and developing successful business relationships.

However, the online conference environment lacks social cues that regulate and influence group behaviour since the interaction is text based. The advantage of text-

based interaction is that a trail of social interaction is kept and participants can revisit text as and when they choose. A crucial question regarding online group discussions is if and how does a social atmosphere develop within an online environment, which is considered by some as a “cold medium,” i.e., alienating and lacking the warmth of intonations, inflections, gestures and body language characterising F2F interactions.

## **1.1 Research Topic**

The object of investigation in this study is social interaction in an online conference. A case study in which researchers from cross disciplines of social sciences, law, and humanities attended an online conference is investigated. According to McNeil, Robin & Miller (2000) social interaction is interaction that does not have instructional implication, but a cultural one. These interactions are affective in that much is communicated by body language, tone of voice and facial expression. McNeil’s view of social interaction presumes F2F interaction where body language, tone of voice and facial expression is the norm. In an online text-based conference, social interaction occurs in the absence of F2F interaction.

## **1.2 Necessity of Research**

Online text-based conferencing has been developed into an important instructional medium that offers significant advantages over F2F discussions (Muirhead, 1999). In addition, professionals groups or communities such as researchers have adopted online conferences as an alternative to F2F conferences to share research findings.

Researchers from the Southern Africa educational region used online conferencing to consult with each other on critical issues and problems. These researchers were selected across the disciplines of social science, humanities, and law.

Although recent technologies have linked people together, geographic separation among participants is still one of the major concerns for effective communication in an online environment (Ubon & Kimble, 2003). The implication of geographic separation is that technology mediated social interaction may be fraught with challenges, hence the need for this research. Since an online conference is text-based, participants cannot see, hear, and feel each other. Hence, the absence of regulating feedback, such as gestures, nods, and tone of voice, may cause coordination problems and deprive participants of salient social cues. In the absence of social context cues and non-verbal behaviour, the computer-mediated communicative discourse is left in a social vacuum quite different

from F2F interaction; this is often quite important in bargaining situations (Boudourides, 1995). Sandwiched by the technological possibilities such as the Internet on one hand, and the social vacuum of technology-mediated conferencing, the need to unravel the enablers and inhibitors of social interaction has become inevitable.

Related research has investigated socio-technical issues of computer-mediated interactions (Jones, 2000); the use of an online conference as a teaching and learning environment (McGugan, 2002); as question-based informal knowledge sharing environment (Ng'ambi, 2004) and chat rooms for supporting social networks (Girgensohn & Lee, 2002).

This study builds on existing research in text-based interaction and computer mediated interaction but diverges from these studies on four dimensions: It investigates what enables or inhibits social interaction in both formal and informal forums of an online cross-disciplinary research conference; it assesses social presence indicators in artefacts; concentrates on asynchronous communication; and uses a qualitative paradigm.

### **1.3 Value of Research**

The F2F conference is a long-standing tradition in professional circles, playing a central role in formal and informal knowledge building and social networks maintenance (Jones, 2000). According to Wellman (1997), a social network is a set of people or organisations or other social entities connected by a set of social relationships, such as friendship, co-working or information exchange.

One benefit of attending a professional conference comes from building formal and informal social networks. While this is understood, it is still unclear how social networks are promoted in an online conference and what enables or hinders their formation. The problem is that while formal patterns of interaction are established in F2F conference such as featured speakers on a podium and eye contact, in an online conference this is not possible. Furthermore, informal interactions in F2F conference happen outside the normal scheduled programs, such as informal chats during breaks, lunches, and social activities prepared by the conference organisers.

This research study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of how social interactions are promoted in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. Cross-disciplinary research activity is rooted in the fact that researchers represent different disciplines. Cross-disciplinary research discussions face many challenges such as different study designs, methods for data collection and analyses as well as divergent

emphases on the theoretical frameworks. This study focuses on ways that these challenges impact on social interaction in an online environment. Research consultation discussions are usually attended by researchers of the same discipline (mono-disciplinary) and not cross-disciplinary. Investigating social interaction in an online conference of cross-disciplinary researchers can help to gain a deep understanding of how these researchers who follow different research methods interact socially online irrespective of their disciplinary inclinations.

The use of qualitative empirical material gathering techniques within an interpretive case study research shapes the analysis of the empirical material. Furthermore, the use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse the posted text messages (artefacts) provide an understanding on what enables and inhibits social interaction in online cross-disciplinary discussions. The social presence indicators template (SPIT) is also used to assess artefacts for social presence. The most important focus of this study is the analysis of artefacts of the online conference.

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

The research's objectives are to investigate how social interactions are promoted in an online cross-disciplinary research conference and to identify social interaction enablers and inhibitors in an online text-based conference.

The following primary question guides the research study:

1. What enables and inhibits social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference?

The following are the research's secondary questions:

1. What social presence indicators are present in artefacts of the online cross-disciplinary research conference?
2. What design features facilitate social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference?

## **1.5 Outline of the Dissertation**

The dissertation starts by reviewing the relevant literature. It is then followed by a broad outline of online conferences particularly looking at uses and features. Chapter three describes the research approach. Chapter four outlines the case study and discusses how the empirical materials were gathered. Chapter five provides the analysis and

interpretation of artefacts and discusses the results in an academically sound structure. Lastly, Chapter six details the conclusion, recommendations for possible further research, and outlines a final word.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the literature review. The purpose of this chapter is to find out as much as possible about what is already known or what has been discovered relevant to this research study.

This chapter consists of six sections; the first section elaborates on social interaction in an online conference environment (Section 2.1). The second section presents a discussion of online conferences (Section 2.2). The succeeding two sections discuss uses (Section 2.3) and features (Section 2.4) of online conferences. The fifth section outlines participation in online conferences (Section 2.5). The last section summarises the chapter (Section 2.6).

#### 2.1 Social Interactions

According to Preece (2000), computer-mediated interactions offer the opportunity for online socialisation, even though it does not create the social interactions. Social interactions are interactions that do not have instructional implications, but cultural ones are affective in that much is communicated by body language, tone of voice and facial expression (Derks *et al.*, 2004; McNeil *et al.*, 2000). Social interactions can provide a great deal of value to its participants include sharing experience and information, endorsing behaviour, surfacing tacit knowledge, and recommending options (Lee, Danis, Miller & Jung, 2001). Moreover, Kollock & Smith (1999) observe that all interactions such as affiliation, impression formation, and building social relationships ultimately and the development of a healthy community of discussions or knowledge sharing are shaped by the sense of with whom an individual is interacting. The value that may be derived from social interaction should hold in the online environment as in the physical world.

A key aspect of establishing social presence in F2F settings is visual cues. Gunawardena (1995) defines social presence as the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships. This means the degree to which a person is perceived as a “real person” in mediated communication (Gunawardena, 1995). When online conference participants have never met, the lack of visual cues may present particular challenges to establishing social

presence (Garrison *et al.*, 2000). Presence as social richness is the extent to which a medium i.e. an online conference is perceived as sociable, warm, sensitive, or personal, when it is used to interact with other people (Spencer, 2002). Spencer (2002) further explains that presence in general is thought to have an intensifying effect on medium users, increasing or enhancing enjoyment, involvement, task performance and training, desensitisation, persuasion, memory/socio-emotion, and para-social interaction.

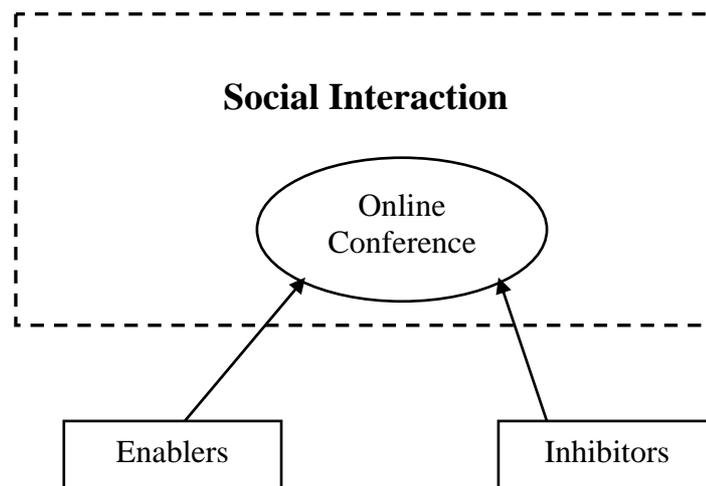
According to McGugan (2002) while social interactions are the cornerstone of the constructivist approach to discussions, a number of barriers to socialisation do exist in the development of online interaction. These barriers may include evaluation anxiety and studying in an alien environment. On the contrary, Taylor (1997) asserts that the lack of social context cues in a computer-mediated communication (CMC) environment is thought to reduce evaluation anxiety. The absence of non-verbal cues in an online environment leaves participants feeling that they have been communicating largely with a machine rather than other human beings (Sit *et al.*, 2005).

According to Krejins *et al.* (2003), the lack of social interaction in an online conference environment is due to the assumption that social interaction will automatically occur because the environment permits it. Furthermore, Krejins *et al.* (2003) assert that if the participation group is large, or if the knowledge being exchanged is not relevant, people are disinclined to participate because it becomes too difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff. In addition, the research findings suggest that these online consultation discussions are open to 'free-riders' seeking answers to specific questions and participants act out of self-interest by exploiting the community to show-off areas of expertise (Krejins *et al.*, 2003).

While most online conference programs are intrinsically interesting for participants, many benefits of attending professional conferences comes from building informal social networks outside of the established program, such as informal chats during coffee/tea breaks, lunches and the evening social activities (Jones, 2000). Moreover, relationships built during informal activities are more robust given the more intimate nature of the F2F medium (Jones 2000). People normally belong to different social networks, reflecting personal and situational differences such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, and physical mobility (Fahy, Crawford & Ally, 2001).

According to Bales (2000), one of the most rewarding parts of any conference is social activities and the ISIS 2000 (Information Services in Schools) was able to offer this in its online environment. The online conference environment had an online café, named

Barmah Café. This was a social meeting place, where the more social participants met for a cocktail hour. These opportunities for social interaction on a global basis were extended through a planned social calendar, which involved several activities (Bales, 2000). Along with general socialising, participants read and ordered from online bar menus and had a drink or two. Bales (2000) explains that this offered participants the chance to become more familiar with the possibilities of interactive text-based objects. The tours promoted a feeling of friendship and camaraderie that is typical of what can happen when a community of like-minded individuals get together (Bales, 2000). These social aspects of the conference added a unique quality to the online experience that culminated in two fancy dress parties held on the closing day of the conference. The two parties were held to cater for the different time zones of some participants (Bales, 2000). Despite several studies documenting advantages of online conferences, some critics claim online interaction is not as effective as traditional F2F because it lacks F2F interactions (Ward & Newlands, 1998). In studies by Ellis (2001) and Hara & Kling (1999), participants reported that there was lack of immediacy of response and lack of the interactive features of conversation that caused the forum discussions to be more constrained. Vonderwell (2003) explains that participants indicated a lack of connection with the instructor, especially ‘one-on-one’ relationship with the instructor. Woods (2002) states that participants reported feeling isolated from the faculty as well as other participants. Figure 1 illustrates the online social interaction being impacted on by enablers and inhibitors.



**Figure 1: Online social interaction enablers and inhibitors**

## 2.2 Online Conferences

Inki (1998) refers to online conferences as a type of CMC that allows a group of people to hold a discussion by computer. A working definition of CMC that pragmatically and in light of the rapidly changing nature of communication technologies, does not specify forms, describes it as the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages (December, 1996). Online conferences are professional educational events that serve as alternatives to traditional F2F conferences (Shimabukuro, 2000).

Unlike traditional conferences, online conferences are not tied to a specific geographical location therefore do not require the participant's physical presence (Shimabukuro, 2000). Green (1998) explains that in conventional F2F conferences, everyone travels to physical locations to debate conference papers and to network. Furthermore, participants have to stay in a particular place, which takes time and is expensive. However, online conferences use the Internet as a conference medium, which means there is no travelling. Taylor (1997) notes that online conferencing allows geographically dispersed individuals to be able to attend the online conference from home and does provide access to hard to reach participants such as business travellers and professionals who have little time during normal hours to participate. The online conference environments are places where participants can interact among themselves and with facilitators almost as if in F2F setting (Bellman, 1992).

Like its counterpart F2F, online conferences run on a schedule with a starting date and a closing date. According to Shimabukuro (2000), online conferences also include activities such as informal chats that begin and end at a certain prescribed time. Online conferences include numerous opportunities for interaction with fellow participants, presenters, keynoters, conference hosts, and staff. Discussions in various media can be recorded for future review and are not, for the most part, time-bound so that presentations and forums are available at any time, virtually, whenever the participant logs on.

Increased advances in communication technology have enabled CMC among geographically dispersed individuals; these include students and academics in higher education institutions and business professionals (Yetim and Turoff, 2004).

## **2.3 Uses of Online Conferences**

Online conferencing can be used to meet a wide spectrum of purposes including knowledge sharing, educational learning, and consensus building. These uses will be discussed in the next sections.

### **2.3.1 Knowledge Sharing**

The proliferation of computers and network access has enabled information and knowledge sharing activities to an extent that was beyond thought prior to the advent of the Internet (Lueg, 2003). Apart from enabling electronic business, the Internet has established itself as a platform for network-based knowledge sharing activities (Handzic & Hasan, 2003). A main role of technology is seen in enabling and facilitating interaction among people for knowledge sharing. The aim according to Handzic & Hasan (2003) is to create a connected virtual environment for knowledge exchange by allowing knowledge seekers to identify and communicate with knowledge sources. In today's fast-paced, global business environment, online conference forums present a potentially valuable venue for interaction among busy, working professionals (Fayard & DeSanctis, 2005; De Souza, 2003; Wasko & Faraj, 2000). To this end, there is an emerging genre of online forums geared toward meeting the development needs of professionals with common interests and complementary knowledge needs (Gray & Tatar, 2004; Herring, 2004).

McGugan (2002) explains that shared knowledge occurs through conversations about activities and outcomes experienced by the participants. McGugan continues to elaborate that central to this is the creation of a knowledge sharing community where participants' viewpoints are widened by appreciating the different perspectives of others, through examples and experiences advanced by fellow participants.

The text-based nature of online conferences provides a permanent learning resource that can facilitate knowledge sharing. Salmon (2000) observes that participants become excited, even joyful about the immediate access and fast exchange of information. Participants also show consternation at the volume of information suddenly becoming available.

### **2.3.2 Educational Learning**

The Internet has the potential to be an invaluable tool for learning and teaching. Many

higher education institutions are relying on CMC, particularly computer conferencing, as a versatile medium for the delivery of educational programs anytime, anywhere (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000), to the extent that online conferencing is now virtually ubiquitous in distance education (Fahy, 2001).

Online learning environments have features that are available in online conference environments such as text-based communication and interaction and can be either synchronous or asynchronous. Traditional F2F classes are being converted to online settings, where materials from syllabi to lectures to assignments are available at the click of a mouse (McNeil *et. al*, 2000).

The online learning environment together with the Internet as a resource tool provides an opportunity for students to develop skills and confidence in handling difficult tasks and problem-solving (Sit, Chung, Chow & Wong, 2005). McGugan (2002) asserts that online learning environments are used to support a variety of learning contexts, ranging from the creation of a complete online course for use by off-campus students to the selection of individual tools to support traditional campus-based learning. Sit *et al.* (2005) observe that in an online learning environment learning materials replace lectures.

Recent research in the area of online learning environments has demonstrated that advantages offered are many. Particularly, the convenience and flexibility offered by the 'anytime, anywhere' accessibility (Jiang & Ting, 2000; Harasim, Hiltz, Teles & Turoff, 1995) and its cost-effectiveness in opening educational opportunities to large numbers of students (Ellis, 2001; Petrides, 2002 and Schrum, 2002). While the online conference in this study was not used for educational learning, many studies on online environments used in educational learning have elucidated enablers and inhibitors of social interaction online. For this reason, this section is included to provide awareness of the usage of online conferences reporting educational learning.

CMC is meant for sharing and building of ideas, information, and skills among the participants to strengthen knowledge building, integration and the application of conceptual information (Harrism *et al.*, 1995). The next section discusses consensus building, another usage of online conferences.

### **2.3.3 Consensus Building**

Scaletta (2004) explains that online conferences can be used for consensus building, enabling participants to discuss a topic until a mutual agreement is reached. The Delphi

method has been utilised as a method to obtain judgments or opinions on a particular topic from geographically dispersed groups of experts (Yetim & Turoff, 2004). Gupta & Clarke (1996) describe the Delphi method as a qualitative, long-range forecasting technique that elicits, refines, and ‘draws upon the collective opinion and expertise of a panel of experts’.

The most important feature of the Delphi method is the ability of members of a group to participate in an asynchronous manner and obtain consensus among participants (Yetim & Turoff, 2004). In Yetim & Turoff’s (2004) study, a Social Decision Support System (SDSS) with the Delphi-like structure was implemented into a software system. The SSDS was designed to allow large groups of people to address complex issues such as the relative value of any group related items. The SSDS provided participants with space to interact and hence changed ways of doing the Delphi exercises. Instead of providing feedback by responding to a questionnaire, participants in an online conference can focus on what they want to consider at the time and the computer dynamically organises the contributions (Yetim & Turoff, 2004).

## **2.4 Features of Online Conference**

An online conference has several features these include asynchronous communication, synchronous communication, written text, consensus building features, and facilitation. These features of online conferences are discussed in this section.

### **2.4.1 Asynchronous**

According to Healey (1998), asynchronous communication gives participants more time to think before responding and allows for more flexibility as to where and when participants can post contributions. In Vonderwell’s (2003) study, 22 participants were surveyed concerning their perceptions of asynchronous online interaction experiences. Some participants expressed that the asynchronous conference allowed carefully written ideas. For example, one participant stated that the discussion questions were not just for writing answers but required reflection. In Petrides’s (2002) study, some participants felt a lack of immediacy in responses in comparison to what could typically occur in a structured F2F discussion. This appears to be especially obvious in asynchronous online discussions when participants have to wait for others to read and respond back to their bulletin board postings.

Asynchronous online conferences hold all messages and display messages on multiple

forums that may be called bulletin boards, discussion topics, or spaces (Berge, 1997).

## **Forums**

Forums contain lists of topics to be discussed, lists of messages about each topic, and lists of responses to each statement (Taylor, 1997). Today forums are vast, covering innumerable specialty topics for a wide array of professional groups. Individuals participate in these forums voluntarily and intermittently for the purpose of acquiring information, skills, and other resources relevant to work interests (Lakhani & von Hippel, 2002).

Wright (2003) states that in most conferencing systems, messages are usually organised by topic or 'thread'. Threaded discussions are structured with an assumption that individual messages are important units (Hamera & Wright, 2004). The threaded discussion shows the list of all messages with headings, so that participants do contribute to a related discussion topic (Wright, 2003). In a typical use of the threaded discussion, a facilitator specifies a topic heading in advance and has participants associate their input such as opinions, messages, or issues with the topic (Jonassen & Remidez Jr., 2005).

### **2.4.2 Synchronous**

Synchronous online conferences spaces take the form of interactive messaging systems. Computer communications are synchronous when participants are aware of real time interaction with others online simultaneously (Spencer, 2002).

According to Carr, Cox, Eden & Hanslo (2004) synchronous online discussion offers opportunity of self-documenting online conferences that occur in real time, enhancing community building, and accelerating informal flows within a team. All participants must be present online at the same time in order to interact and when many people do so, the text on the screen can scroll along at a furious pace, with the discussion having much of the flexibility of the spoken word (Collins & Berge, 2001).

Green (1998) outlines the four equally compelling advantages of synchronous systems. Firstly, it motivates and focuses the energy of the group. Secondly, tele-presence in real time interaction helps to develop group cohesion. Thirdly, there is good quick feedback on ideas, it supports consensus and decision-making, and lastly pacing encourages people to keep up-to-date and provides discipline.

However, synchronous communication is problematic in many respects, most notably,

since people have to all be online simultaneously, hence synchronous communication negates time independence (Berge, 1997). Presence indicators and chat rooms are synchronous features of online conferences and are discussed next.

### **Presence Indicators**

Synchronous online conferences systems commonly have an indicator of online presence, which are indications of who is or is not online (Adesemowo & Tucker, 2004). Furthermore, Naso & Fernández (2004) explain that presence indicators provide information about user availability (e.g. free, occupied, off-line, etc). Knowing presence/absence means that the sender of a message knows that if presence is not indicated, then they have to wait, or they have to use a non-synchronous messaging form (Hulme, 2003).

### **Chat Rooms**

A chat room is a synchronous space where messages are almost immediately transmitted from one user's computer directly to the display of another user or group of users. Kollock & Smith (1999) state that a chat room differs from e-mail lists and bulletin boards in that it supports synchronous communication where a number of people can chat in real time by sending lines of text to one another. Chat is one of the most popular forms of interaction on the Internet, and accounts for a sizeable proportion of the revenue of the commercial online providers such as America Online (Kollock & Smith, 1999).

An individual can access an online chat room without actually writing anything just reading available discussions, until one becomes familiar with a number of chat users. Reading discussions facilitates the formation of impressions about other people's personality and values through the exposure effect (Peris *et al.*, 2002). It is not the purpose of this research to discuss much on chat rooms, as the online conference under investigation did not use this feature of synchronous communication.

### **2.4.3 Text-based Interactions**

Interactions in an online conference are based mostly upon written communications also described as text-based (Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002). Online conference proceedings are both recorded and archived, hence discussions are available indefinitely giving participants time to read discussions, catch up on what was missed and reflect on

what happened (Minshull, 2004).

In a similar vein, Green (1998) explains that text-based communications allow participants to enter and leave online conferences. In F2F conferences, individuals check in and out (either mentally or physically!), but are unable to recapture what has transpired in their absence. In view of that, online conferences enable participants to pick out threads of ideas emerging from discussions and relate emerging themes in different ways to deepen understanding of the topic (Wright, 2003). In Berge's (1997) study, the perception by some participants was that written communication is more reflective than spoken.

Text-based discussion allows participants to take time to organise thoughts before writing and these contributions tend to be more thoughtful and clear than spontaneous remarks made in the heat of a verbal discussion (Wright, 2003). In F2F environment, individuals with greater social presence may dominate the discussion through social cues such as social status, voice, eloquence of speech, facial, and physical appearance (Hew & Cheng, 2003). For instance, a loud and aggressive individual may deter others from expressing their views, while a persuasive speaker may sway others. Moreover, individuals may hold back responses or comments that may hurt or offend the other party's feelings. In the text-based medium participants, do not see one another F2F. Furthermore, text-based interactions can diminish the stereotyping associated with high external social status, physical appearance/disabilities, or cultural differences, thereby removing a significant barrier to participation (Collins & Berge, 2001).

A study conducted by Taylor (1997) found that when using an online-conferencing system, participants were able to address topics, which they would have been reluctant to do through normal conversation or correspondence, and that shy individuals were able to express themselves in a voluble manner. In Duffy, Arnold, & Henderson's study (1995), it was found that there was debate that is more active because quieter group members found it easier to contribute. Duffy *et al.* further state that lack of F2F cues reduced the pressure for instant communication and allowed time to phrase response.

While the exchange of written messages has been found to have some positive benefits on group communication, Trushell, Reymond & Burrell (1998) explain that it must be noted that the loss of some of features normally associated with F2F discussions are sometimes perceived as inhibiting by participants. The additional meaning found in voice and F2F communication that is carried by inflections in the voice, gestures, dress, tone, posture, and other indicators is missing (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991), so that the

medium remains open to multiple interpretations.

Harasim (1990) describes the inhibiting factors of text-based communication, as including, the lack of physical cues such as facial expressions, voice intonations, gestures and nuances of speech (humour, irony), and secondly, the 'vulnerability' of contributing ideas to a conference when reactions of other participants cannot be anticipated. Berge (1997) observes that this absence of verbal cues allows students to concentrate on the content of the message rather than the facilitator.

Walther (1994) asserts that participants develop techniques, such as the use of emoticons or other unconventional symbolic displays, to add affective components to computer-mediated dialogue. Online conferencing systems do provide users way to express emotions. One method of transmitting such information is using emoticons that are discussed next.

## **Emoticons**

Emoticons are intended to enable users in online discussion sessions to select or type specific icons that depict typical human actions, such as, applauding, frowning, laughing, etc. that can be displayed to other collaboration users (McCoy, 2002).

Typical implementations of emoticons are used to convey sentiment or emotion in a collaborative environment where modes to express body language and voice inflections are not available. It provides users a non-interruptive way to participate and register their reactions to subjects or discussions in real time (McCoy, 2002). Text emoticons (also called 'smilies') refer to the unconventional use of text to create a visual representation of a mood which can be simple keyboard characters such as :>). Graphical emoticons have become quite popular in text based online forums. Basic graphic emoticons cover the same emotions as the text emoticons do. For example, if a group member is happy with a decision, he/she might send a smile icon with the message.

According to Derks *et al.*, (2004) emoticons may serve as non-verbal surrogates, suggestive of facial expression, and may add a paralinguistic component to a message. Emoticons enhance the exchange of social information by providing additional social cues beyond what is found in the text of a message (Thompson & Foulger, 1996). CMC users often incorporate emoticons as visual cues to augment the meaning of textual electronic messages (Rezabek & Cochenour, 1998).

Both F2F conference and online conferences appear similar to the extent that both

involve formal or informal leadership or facilitation (Collins and Berge, 2001). The next section discusses facilitation in an online conference.

#### **2.4.4 Facilitation**

In an online conference, it is much easier to separate the role of process facilitation from that of content leadership. It is also quite easy to develop a number of different leaders for different areas of a problem (Turoff & Hiltz, 1995).

Shimabukuro (2000) states that the role of facilitation in an online conference is to open the conference officially with greetings that are e-mailed to all participants at the official start time. Simultaneously, greetings are posted on the conference website too, followed by the first keynote, through e-mail. After the keynote, an e-mail forum devoted to a discussion of the ideas presented in the keynote is announced (Shimabukuro, 2000). A different keynote opens each day of the online conference, and a forum is developed for each topic under discussion, participants can join as many forums as they wish (Shimabukuro, 2000).

Hootstein (2002) indicates that effective facilitation involves the use of comments, questions, and probes to help participants connect around shared problems and experience in using this medium.

Past research on computer-mediated group interactions indicates that facilitation enhances the quality of group discussions (Nunamaker, Dennis, Valacich, Vogel & George, 1991). In Turoff & Hiltz's (1995) study, the facilitation role was to state counter-arguments in order to get more in-depth arguments from participants. Computer conferencing systems such as bulletin boards have long used facilitation to overcome the communication problems that arise due to a lack of F2F interactions (Mark, Grudin & Poltrock, 1999).

In some online conference systems, the Delphi method features are implemented to allow participants to vote on issues being discussed. The next section discusses consensus-building features that are implemented into online conference systems.

#### **2.4.5 Consensus Building Features**

One of the consensus building features of the Delphi method implemented into online conference systems is voting. Not only in democratic elections, but also in units or groups working together in any structured discussion process (Salz & Voss, 2003). Voting allows gathering and concentrating opinions from many participants and offers

the possibility to converge diverging opinions by identifying significant points of agreement or disagreement and by systematically comparing the different points of view (Salz & Voss, 2003).

A computerised Delphi process can be matched with dynamic voting tools to enable participants to explore their difference opinions and speed up consensus building without the need to wait until all opinions are collected and tallied as in the traditional Delphi process (Cheng, Li & Van de Welle, 2001). Turoff & Hiltz (1995) observe that techniques were developed and refined in the evolution of Delphi Method, voting has been incorporated as basic facilities or tools in many of these computer based systems. In the 'paper and pencil' Delphi every contribution first goes to the facilitator of the exercise and then is integrated into a single summary provided to all of the participants (Turoff & Hiltz, 1995). Clearly, in the computer-based environment, this is not necessary. Whether or not, given contributions need to be screened ahead of time is a function of the application and the nature of a particular contribution (Turoff & Hiltz, 1995). Turoff & Hiltz (1995) further note that since the individual participants can update themselves on what is new before making a contribution, the amount of duplication is minimised in a computer based Delphi.

Computerised Delphi systems are based on asynchronous communication in which any participant can add messages to be discussed and other participants can evaluate the validity of those items using voting tools (Turoff, Hiltz, Bieber, Fjermestad & Rana, 1999). In a computerised Delphi process, participants are asked to make a quantitative judgment about the future trend and explicitly specify the underlying assumptions behind participants' judgments or any additional uncertainties, which would change participants, estimates. These assumptions and uncertainties are structured as separate nodes in the system. A computer-implemented Delphi online system allows participants to cut rounds of voting, for instance three rounds are reduced to only two rounds (Yetim & Turoff, 2004).

## **2.5 Participation in Online Conferences**

In online conferences there is a greater likelihood that participants can find time to sign onto online conferences at the time most convenient to them (Green, 1998). There is a high level of participation; typically, more people will actively participate in online conferences than in F2F conferences (Shimabukuro, 2000). Individuals are able to access and read online conference proceedings from anywhere as long as there is the

Internet. Whilst in F2F conferences some individual may not be able to travel, or devote adequate time to attend the conference proceedings. The removal of travel, travel-related costs, and reduced conference registration fees has given online conferences the potential to become accessible to a wider range of delegates (Thatcher, 2003). Particularly, individuals from more impoverished parts of the world, who cannot afford the high costs of many “international” face-to-face conferences, are now able to attend and participate in online conferences.

In Petrides’s (2002) study participants reported that it was easier to work in an online environment without re-arranging everyone’s schedule as one might do in a traditional F2F. For example, in Poole’s (2000) study of students’ participation in a discussion-oriented online course, results indicated that students participated in online discussions at times most convenient to them, such as on Saturdays. Poole also found that students mostly accessed course materials from home computers, the most convenient place. Online learning overcomes drawbacks that are inherent in traditional classroom teaching, especially its lack of flexibility in the use of resources, including space and time scheduling (Makitalo, Weinberger, Hakkinen, Jarvela & Fischer, 2005).

Shimabukuro (2000) explains that the feature that mattered most was the greater potential for interaction possible at an online conference. At F2F conference, it is not possible to attend all presentations and personally interact with all presenters. Shimabukuro further asserts that theoretically in an online environment, participant can also actively participate in all the open forums, roundtables, special panel-forums, workshops, keynote discussions, and tours.

However, Romiszowski & Mason (1996) assert that in an online conference, a majority of participants do not contribute to the discussion list in any given time. Of those who do contribute, most tend to make only a small number of contributions, while a small number of active subscribers provide a larger proportion of message contributions (Romiszowski & Mason, 1996). Most participants are more often passive recipients of messages (lurkers), rather than active contributors to discussions (Romiszowski & Mason, 1996). Lurkers are individuals that read messages but do not post anything (Preece, Nonnecke, & Andrews, 2004). Nonnecke, Preece, Andrews, & Voutour’s (2004) study found out that individuals lurked for many reasons such as just reading/browsing is enough; still learning about the group; no requirement to post; and nothing to offer.

## 2.6 Summary

A review of the literature has presented an understanding of social interaction in a technology-mediated environment. The literature review has shown that text-based online conferences are increasingly being used; it outlined its advantages, some limitations, and justified its use. Participants are able to read messages contributed by others by adding comments, or adding their own ideas in new messages. Online conferencing has the potential to allow geographically dispersed experts to interact and exchange information thus creating opportunities for rich conversations, which grow knowledge in a community. Features of the Delphi method such as voting and feedback are being implemented into online conferencing systems.

In addition, both use forum systems to promote group communications and interactions. Even though there is an increase in the use of this type of communication medium, much concern has been expressed on the lack of social or visual cues in these text-based interactions. The literature review has also revealed the online social interaction enablers and inhibitors as depicted in Table 1.

Social activities and the social places were found to enable interaction. Studies showed that the inclusion of an online café and naming of forums after exotic places in the online conference environment did make participants visit the online cafés. Active facilitation before and during the online conference was an enabler of social interaction. Studies stated that facilitators sent invitational emails to participants of the online conference and encouraged contributions from participants during the conference discussions. Studies showed that participants were recommending possible options to other participants. Recommending options was found to enable social interaction. Endorsing behaviour was found to enable social interaction; studies showed that participants acknowledged each others' presence and contributions in the online conference. Sharing and seeking information was found to enable social interaction, studies showed that participants sought and shared information with other participants. Time, geographical convenience, and flexibility were found to enable interaction, studies showed that participants were able to attend the online discussions at the most convenient time and place. The literature has reported that quieter participants were confident to contribute to discussions without the fear of being evaluated by others, hence there was reduced evaluation anxiety, which increased participants' confidence such that interaction was enabled. Studies showed that social presence had an increasing outcome in the online discussions such that social presence was found to enable

interaction. Furthermore, sense of community (affiliation) and building relationships were found to enable interaction. The literature found that participants were eager to participate in the online discussions as they felt part of the online community. Studies showed that some participants used the online conference to build relationships with other participants.

The literature states that the incorporation of emoticons within the design of the online discussion environments allowed participants to choose specific emoticons to express their emotions, whilst other participants used parentheses instead. Studies showed that availability of these features enabled interaction.

Studies showed that online conferences have no visual cues such as hand, facial gestures, and verbal cues, some participants preferred to interact if these cues were present. The absence of these cues prohibited participants from taking part in the online contributions and these participants felt isolated. Lack of visual cues, verbal and isolation was found to inhibit social interaction. Since there was no immediate responses to participants' posted messages, studies showed that participants had to wait for new contributions from other participants. Lack of immediacy was found to inhibit interaction. Evaluation anxiety was found to inhibit interaction, the literature stated that some participants felt that other participants were evaluating them, checking if what was posted had grammatical errors or not. Studies showed that some participants felt uncomfortable to hold discussions in an online conference, as it was considered an alien environment. Hence, alien environment was found to inhibit interaction. Large groups were found to inhibit interaction, the literature showed that when participation groups were large, not all participants participate others lurk. Lack of connectivity was found to inhibit interaction, the literature found that some participants had no means of connecting to the Internet. The next chapter discusses the research approach adapted in this study.

**Table 1: online Social interaction enablers and inhibitors**

<b>Enablers</b>	<b>Reference(s)</b>	<b>Inhibitors</b>	<b>Reference(s)</b>
Social activities	Bales (2000); Jones (2000)	Lack of verbal and visual interaction	Harasim (1990); Ward & Newlands (1998); Garrison <i>et al.</i> ( 2000); Berge (1997); Sit <i>et al.</i> (2005); Hara & Kling (1999); Ellis(2001)
Sense of community – affiliation	Kollock & Smith (1999); Bales (2000)	Lack of immediacy	Hara & Kling (1999); Ellis (2001);
Facilitation	Nunamaker <i>et al.</i> (1991)	Evaluation anxiety	McGugan (2002)
Recommending options	Lee <i>et al.</i> ( 2001)	Alien environment	McGugan (2002); Sit <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Endorsing behaviour	Lee <i>et al.</i> ( 2001)	Irrelevant topic(s)	Krejins <i>et al.</i> (2003)
Social presence	Gunawardena (1995)	Large participation groups	Krejins <i>et al.</i> (2003)
Emoticons and parentheses	Thompson & Foulger (1996); Rezabek &	Lack of connectivity	Vonderwell (2003)
Time and geographical convenience and flexibility	Vonderwell (2003); Wright (2003); Minshull (2004); Green(1998); Thatcher (2003)	Isolation	Woods (2002)
Increase confidence and reduced evaluation anxiety	Taylor (1997)		
Building relationships	Kollock & Smith (1999); Jones (2000)		
Sharing and seeking information	Lee <i>et al.</i> (2001); Lakhani & von Hippel (2002); Salmon (2000); Kollock & Smith (1999)		
Social places/spaces	Bales (2000)		

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH APPROACH**

This chapter outlines the research approach adopted in this research study. According to Remenyi & Williams (1995), research methodology refers to the procedural framework within which research is to be conducted. The research method definition used in this research study comes from Myers (1997), who defines research method as a strategy of inquiry, which moves from underlying philosophical assumptions to research design and data collection.

The research approach chapter is composed of five sections; the first section discusses the qualitative paradigm (Section 3.1). The second section presents a discussion of the interpretive research approach adapted in this research study (Section 3.2). The third section elaborates on the research strategy adapted to assist in answering the research questions stated in Section 1.4 (Section 3.3). The fourth section outlines the analytical frameworks adapted in this study (Section 3.4), and the last section gives the concluding remarks of the chapter (Section 3.5).

#### **3.1 Qualitative Paradigm**

The definition of ‘qualitative paradigm’ used in this research study is taken from Myers & Avison (2002). Myers & Avison define qualitative paradigm as being that it involves the use of qualitative data, such as interviews, documents, and participant observation, to understand and explain social phenomena. Although participants’ observations are not possible in this case, artefacts of interactions, logs, and evaluation comments are analysed.

The motivation for the qualitative, as opposed to the quantitative paradigm, as Myers (1997) remarks, comes from the observation that informs the choice of approach. One thing that distinguishes humans from the natural world is the ability to ‘talk’. Qualitative paradigm methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. It must be pointed out that while an online conference was not a habitat of participants it was an authentic conference. The research study explores social interactions from conference participants’ viewpoints. Kaplan & Maxwell (1994) argue that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified.

The objective of this research study is to investigate how social interactions are enabled in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. Social interaction is a social phenomenon and is therefore hard to measure or quantify, in fact the most appropriate way of understanding actions of social actors may not necessarily be through numbers and rigorous statistical tests. In the Information Systems (IS) field, qualitative research has been classified according to three well-known research approaches and assumptions: Positivist, interpretive, and critical (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

### **3.2 Interpretive Research Approach**

Several IS researchers have defined interpretive research and this research study uses the Klein & Myers's (1999, p. 69) definition:

*“... it does not define dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges; it attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them”;*

The underlying philosophical assumption adopted in this research study is interpretive because the social interactions are being investigated from participants' expressive views.

A key task in interpretive research described by Klein & Myers (1999) is seeking meaning in context; the subject matter must be set in its social and historical context so the reader can see how the current situation emerged. Darke, Shanks & Broadbent (1998) further point out that the interpretive approach is based on an ontology, which is subjective and a social product that is constructed and interpreted by humans as social actors according to individuals' beliefs and value systems. Trauth & Jessup (2000) remark that in choosing an interpretive research approach, the researcher is acknowledging that the access to the world of the people being studied comes through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. These arguments provide a way of viewing an online conference in its social context.

The interpretive research approach is now accepted as a valid research framework for Information Systems research. Furthermore, an interpretive research approach allows for the emergence of unexpected results and factors, which are desirable in developing any new area of study (Klein & Myers, 1999), such as investigating enablers and inhibitors of social interaction of cross-disciplinary researchers in an online conference. It is hoped that the interpretive approach would provide a richness of understanding that would be beneficial to both aims of this study. As there are various philosophical perspectives that

can inform qualitative research, the choice of research method, influences the way in which the researcher collects empirical materials (Myers, 1997).

### **3.3 Case Study Strategy**

The research strategy adopted for this study is case study. Several IS authors (Myers, 1997; Walsham, 1995; Yin, 1994) have defined case study as an empirical inquiry that examines a contemporary phenomena within its real life and natural context by employing methods for data collection from one or several entities. In other words, case study research is a method of organising data and, ultimately, of reaching conclusions from the data. Yin's (1994, p.13) defines a case study as:

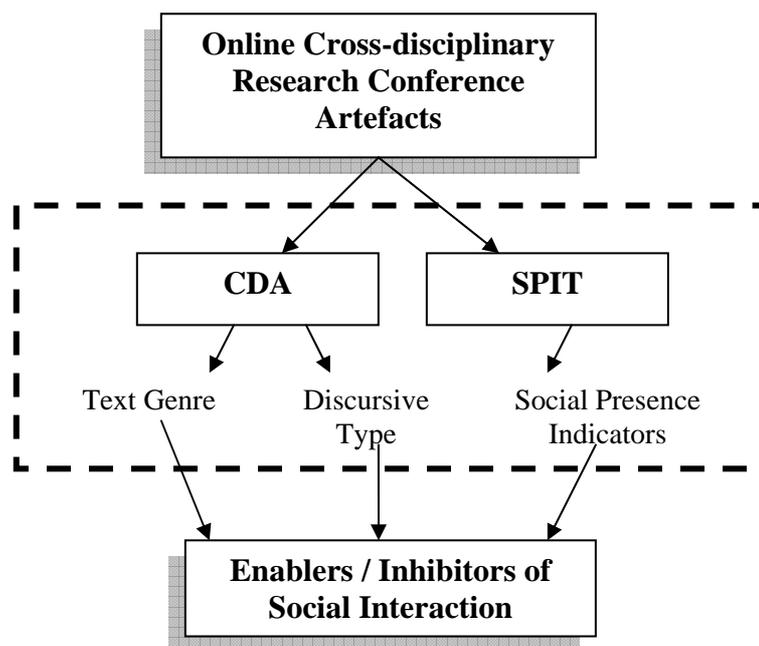
*...“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and it relies on multiple sources of evidence.”*

The relevance of this research study is that the choice of case study research strategy allows the researcher to collect qualitative empirical material of online conference environment interactions.

Klein & Myers (1999) argue that case study strategy is used in situations where the purpose of the research and its objectives are to find out answers to questions of 'how' or 'what'. In this research study the main research question asks, what are enablers and inhibitors of social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. A case study research method uses one or more techniques for collecting empirical material (Myers, 1997).

### **3.4 Analytical Framework**

The analytical framework used is a combination of CDA and SPIT which are used to analyse both participants' and facilitators' artefacts in relation to social interaction. CDA acknowledges certain text genres, discursive types, and their effect on social interaction. Text analysis can also highlight social presence in CMC conferences (Poscente, 2002). SPIT uses three categories of responses to assess 11 social presence indicators. Figure 2 depicts the two analytical methods that guided the analysis of artefacts. In the next section, a discussion of CDA is given and Section 3.4.2 presents a discussion of SPIT.



**Figure 2: Analytical framework overview**

### 3.4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of texts, which views ‘language as a form of social practice’ (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough argues that critical discourse analysis attempts to unpack the ideological underpinnings of discourse that have become so naturalized over time that we begin to treat them as common, acceptable and natural features of discourse. CDA does not only help to interpret texts, but also explains them (Ng’ambi, 2004). The use of CDA in this research study is to assist in the analysis of artefacts, and understanding the process of production and interpretation of text. CDA also provides a way of thinking that analysing text and discourse practices may give access to social identities and social relations (Ng’ambi, 2004).

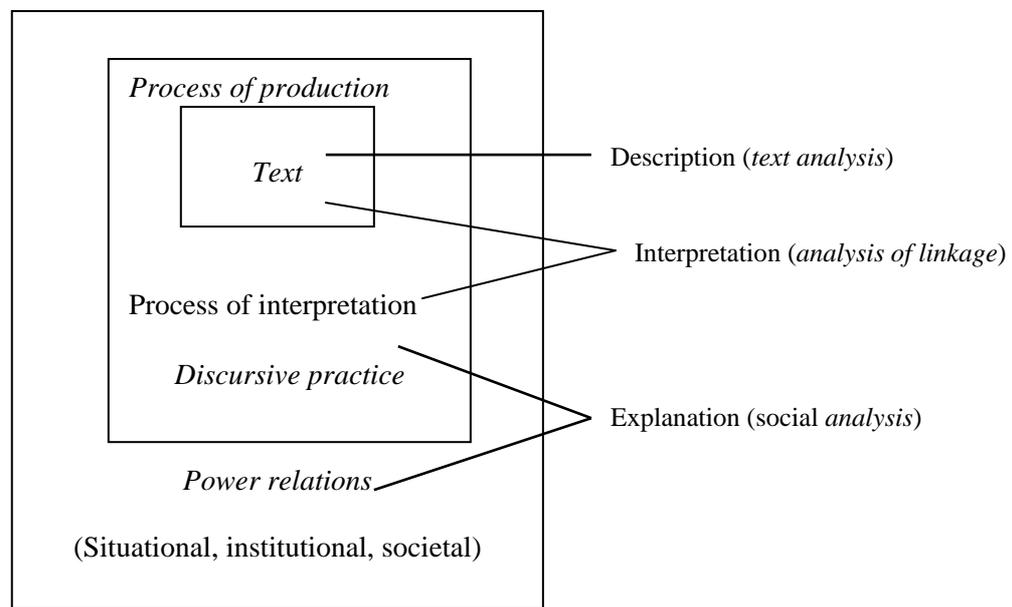
Widdowson (2000 cited by Sng, 2001) asserts that CDA is the uncovering of implicit ideology in texts, exposing underlying ideological bias and therefore exposes the power relations embedded in texts. Power involves control, namely by members of one group over those of other groups. This is particularly important in this research study because social interaction in an online conference may be fraught with power relations. Furthermore, real world power hierarchies within professional groups (i.e. researchers) may be carried over into the virtual domain.

Fairclough (1995) describes three levels at which texts should be analysed, with a view to uncovering, the implicit power relations that they enact and embody. These three levels of

analysis (see Figure 3) are:

1. The textual ('description' - how does the text manage to mean what it does?);
2. The interactional ('interpretation' - what does the text do, what move does it make?); and
3. The social ('explanation' - what were the conditions of the text's production and interpretation?).

This suggests that it is possible to find out what is said in the text to what can be said from the text. In CDA, 'discursive practice' is thus the mediator between the macro- and micro-levels as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis (Adapted from Thompson, 2004).**

The activities on the right of the model represent the framework of analysis, in which a piece of text is described, and then the discursive practices upon which it draws are identified, and linked to the underlying power relations which may be reproduced by the interaction (Thompson, 2004). The social interaction happens within the discursive practices, which produces text, and through the analysis of the text messages, evidence of social interaction can be revealed or noted. Furthermore, the discursive practices are influenced by the situation or environment of a participant.

Similarly, Atkins (2002) explains that the three levels of discourse of the framework are firstly, *social conditions of production and interpretation*, i.e. factors in society that have

led to the production of a text and how these factors effect interpretation. Secondly, the *process of production and interpretation of text*, i.e. how the text has been produced which effects interpretation. Thirdly, the product of the first two stages, the *text*.

In selecting sections of text for analysis, the researcher/analyst looks for identifiable configurations of ‘discursive practice’ consisting of discrete, unique utterances, or combinations of idioms, references, inferences or phrases within a particular order of discourse (Thompson, 2004). The data analysis is carried on selected artefacts (text messages) from online conference spaces using critical discourse analysis where certain text genres and discursive types (Roode *et al.*, 2004) are acknowledged looking at issues of power and domination. In particular this research study seeks to understand how these impact/or influence social interactions in an online text-based environment.

### **3.4.2 Social Presence Indicators Template (SPIT)**

Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer (2001) social presence indicators assessment template (Table 2) acknowledges three categories into which social presence indicators namely, affective, interactive, and cohesive responses can be grouped.

#### **Affective Responses**

Garrison *et al.* (2000) describe the expression of emotion, feeling, and mood as characteristics of social presence. The adjectives attributed to social presence e.g., closeness, warmth, affiliation, attraction and openness all point to affective interaction (Rourke *et al.*, 2001). Affect is expressed in computer conferencing in a number of ways, including the use of emoticons, humour, and self-disclosure. Kuehn (1993) explains that text-based, asynchronous interlocutors employ unconventional symbolic representations, such as emoticons, to facilitate expressiveness in the medium. Gunawardena & Zittle (1997) found that conference participants enhanced their socio-emotional experience by using emoticons to express missing nonverbal cues in written form.

Furthermore, Rourke *et al.* (2001) assert that humour is like an invitation to start a conversation, it aims at decreasing social distance, and it conveys goodwill. Research by Eggins & Slade (1997) reinforces the importance of humour as an indicator of social presence. Eggins & Slade found humour to be a pervasive characteristic of casual conversation, in contrast to its infrequent occurrence in formal, pragmatic interactions.

**Table 2: Social presence indicators template**

Category	Indicators	Definition
<b>Affective</b>	Expression of emotions	Conventional expressions of emotion, or unconventional expressions of emotion, include, repetitious punctuation, conspicuous capitalisation, emoticons.
	Use of humour	Teasing, cajoling, irony, understatements, sarcasm.
<b>Interactive</b>	Continuing a thread.	Using reply feature of software, rather than starting a new thread.
	Quoting from others' messages.	Using software features to quote others entire message or cut and pasting selections of others' messages.
	Referring explicitly to others' messages.	Direct references to contents of others' posts.
	Asking questions	Participants ask questions to other participants or the facilitator.
	Complimenting, expressing appreciation	Complimenting others or contents of others' messages.
	Expressing agreement	Expressing agreement with others or content of others' messages
<b>Cohesive</b>	Vocatives	Addressing or referring to participants by name.
	Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns	Addresses the group as we, us, our, group.
	Phatics, salutations	Communication that serves a purely social function; greetings, closures.

Source: (Adapted from Rourke *et al.*, 2001)

### Interactive Responses

According to Eggins & Slade (1997), responses and rejoinders serve several beneficial purposes in conversation. They build and sustain relationships, express a willingness to maintain and prolong contact, and tacitly indicate interpersonal support, encouragement, and acceptance of the initiator. The using of the “reply” feature to post messages, quoting directly from the conference transcript, and referring explicitly to the content of others' messages are all types of interactive response in CMC (Rourke *et al.*, 2001). Rourke *et al.* (2001) assert that complimenting and acknowledging, and expressing appreciation, are ways of communicating reinforcement in a text-based medium.

### Cohesive Responses

This category is exemplified by activities that build and sustain a sense of group commitment. It is defined in the analysis by three indicators namely phatics and salutations, vocatives and addressing the group as “we,” or to establish a mood of

sociability rather than to communicate information or ideas (Rouke *et al.*, 2001). Bussman (1998) suggests that phatics serve to confirm ties of union, and include communicative acts such as formal inquiries about one's health, remarks about the weather, or comments about trivial matters. Vocatives i.e., addressing participants by name are also an important expression of cohesion. Eggins & Slade (1997) support the use of vocatives to facilitate social presence, the use of redundant vocatives would tend to indicate an attempt by the addresser to establish a closer relationship with the addressee. A variation of the vocative effect occurs at the group level, in which participants refer to the group with inclusive pronouns such as "we," "our," "us," or "group."

### **3.5 Summary**

The research study investigates what enables and inhibits social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. This chapter gave an overview of the appropriate research underlying philosophical assumption and case study strategy adapted in this research study. Furthermore, the analytical framework to be used to analyse empirical materials was given. The research approach detailed in this chapter will assist in the answering of the research question posed in Section 1.4. The succeeding chapter discusses the process of gathering of empirical materials.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION**

The case study description chapter consists of seven sections; the first section discusses the online conference being studied (Section 4.1). The second section outlines the purpose of the cross-disciplinary research conference, looks at what researchers were discussing, and who the role players of the conference were (Section 4.2). The third section describes the online conference environment (Section 4.3). The fourth section discusses the available forums present in the online conference environment (Section 4.4). The fifth section elaborates on the participation of the online conference; and looks at how many of the invited participants did post text messages (Section 4.5). The sixth section discusses the gathering of empirical materials and details the qualitative techniques used to gather empirical material (Section 4.6). The last section presents a summary of the chapter (Section 4.7).

#### **4.1 The Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge (SBK) Online Conference**

The SBK online conference used text-based interactions and asynchronous communication. Participants were researchers drawn from disciplines of social sciences, law, and humanities (SSLH) from the Southern Africa educational region including invited guests from other disciplines. The online conference took place over a period of three weeks, from Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> April until Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2005. The SBK online conference was hosted and organised by the Centre for Educational Technology (CET) at University of Cape Town (UCT) in partnership with the National Research Foundation (NRF). As sponsors of the project, the NRF identified these participants through the SSLH project.

The online conference environment was built on w-agera discussion software; this was designed, built, and customised by CET for the purpose of the SSLH project (CET, 2005). The online conference environment was on a CET server located on the UCT network. CET did publish the public information conference website. On the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2005, the online conference website was opened for invited researchers to explore and read the conference public information. Prior to the online discussion sessions commencing, an invitation e-mail was sent by CET to all invited researchers to login into the website and join the process. Leading up to the online conference opening, the online conference

organisers sent an initial announcement by e-mail again to all invited researchers.

During the online conference, CET provided facilitation support to encourage participation in forums and sent daily updates to all participants, during weekdays of the online conference. In addition, CET sent personalised messages to participants who had not yet logged in or not yet posted messages, to encourage them to participate. CET sent messages on behalf of the project owners as well, to all invited researchers, at the beginning and end of the last week of the conference. At the end of the online conference, CET sent a closing message, and an invitation to all online conference participants to complete an evaluation survey.

Lastly, CET provided technical support by telephone and e-mail to participants who had difficulties logging into or using the online conference environment (CET, 2005). The site had also help menus.

## **4.2 Purpose of the SBK Online Conference**

The purpose of the SBK online conference was for researchers to discuss critical research issues for immediate and future enquiry. The NRF officials identified six cross-disciplinary themes from the 55 concept papers that were submitted by researchers during the first phase of the SSLH project. These concept papers allowed participants to frame discussions across SSLH disciplinary boundaries.

The conference was organised around these six themes namely paradigms; notions of difference; space and place; knowledge and agency; rules, regulations, entitlements & social justice; and technologies and society. The conference was split in two phases.

The first phase of the online conference was from the 11th April to the 22nd April 2005, and involved researchers exploring the six themes, considering definitions, asking general or specific questions, and giving out comments. For each of the six themes researchers engaged with three key questions:

1. What are the issues that are core to this theme?
2. In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?
3. In what ways could this theme serve SSLH in SA?

The second phase, from the 22nd April until the 29th April 2005, consolidated the discussion through an opening statement of responses and reasons summarised from the first phase, established areas of consensus and dissensus, and considered the set of themes

as a whole. Researchers considered implications of the six themes for their research and research policy. During this period, discussions were on how the SSLH research community can respond to changes in the nature of knowledge production. In addition, to find out to what extent researchers' work presently or future research is likely to shift knowledge and practice boundaries.

Lastly, in the period between the 28<sup>th</sup> April and the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2005, researchers' discussions were also centred on giving some quick feedback before the online conference concluded.

#### **4.2.1 Cross-disciplinary Research and its challenges**

Though most research is still mono-disciplinary, research involving more than one discipline has become more frequent and has widened the spectrum of innovative research (Aagaard-Hansen, Johansen & Riis, 2004). Aagaard-Hansen *et al.* (2004) defines cross-disciplinary research as research comprising of different formalised specialities. Research problems are often multidimensional and interlinked and therefore addressing only one or few of these has seldom been enough to make a difference (Halberg & Schou Larsen, 2003).

However, cross-disciplinary research poses a number of challenges regarding study designs, methods of collecting data and analysis as well as divergent emphasis on theoretical framework (often based on different paradigms) (Aagaard-Hansen *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore Aagaard-Hansen *et al.* (2004) describe four other additional constraints faced by cross-disciplinary research. Firstly, the career structures of most disciplines are based on mono-disciplinary advancements. Secondly, funding is mainly provided by research agencies that are if not mono-disciplinary then confined within traditional delimitations of for example natural or social sciences. Thirdly, evaluation is mostly based on mono-disciplinary criteria and lastly the different choice of journal for publication (preferably in prestigious journals many of which are mono-disciplinary) and the disparate publication preferences (e.g., whether a discipline favours monographs with one author or smaller articles with many co-authors) constrain cross-disciplinary publishing.

As with the F2F conference, an online conference has its own role players who are involved with funding and organising activities for the conference. The role players of the online cross-disciplinary research conference are presented in the next section.

## **4.2.2 Role Players**

The main role players of the online cross-disciplinary research conference were researchers, the NRF, and facilitators.

### **Researchers**

Researchers' purposes in attending the online conference were to identify and make visible the critical research issues and challenges, and compete for funding from the NRF. The expected benefits of attending the online conference were that possible areas of research and research collaboration would be identified.

### **Facilitators**

The purpose of facilitators in organising the online conference was to make sure that the online discussions are meaningful, focused, and encourage participations among participants (Green, 1998). Some additional purposes were to provide updates of daily activities to all participants and to make sure that most of the invited participants do take part in the online discussions. Some of expected benefits from facilitators were that all invited participants participated and posted more messages towards the online conference discussions.

### **The National Research Foundation (NRF)**

The purpose of the NRF in funding the online conference was to mobilise the SSLH research community to engage in a scholarly debate around their position. Secondly, the NRF provided a focus for future research priorities within and between disciplines, not only within the SSLH community but also across the whole science and knowledge system. The expected benefits from the NRF for the online conference were that participants jointly agreed and came up with possible critical research areas that can be funded.

## **4.3 SBK Online Conference Environment**

The SBK online conference screens were composed of visual and textual signs. Figure 4 shows a snapshot of the SBK online conference website, which contained the public information. The login menu item took participants into the online conference environment. The SSLH project menu item took users to a brief description of the project including its purpose, its objectives, and the method used to reach consensus. The research

output menu item took users to summarised findings of the research project.

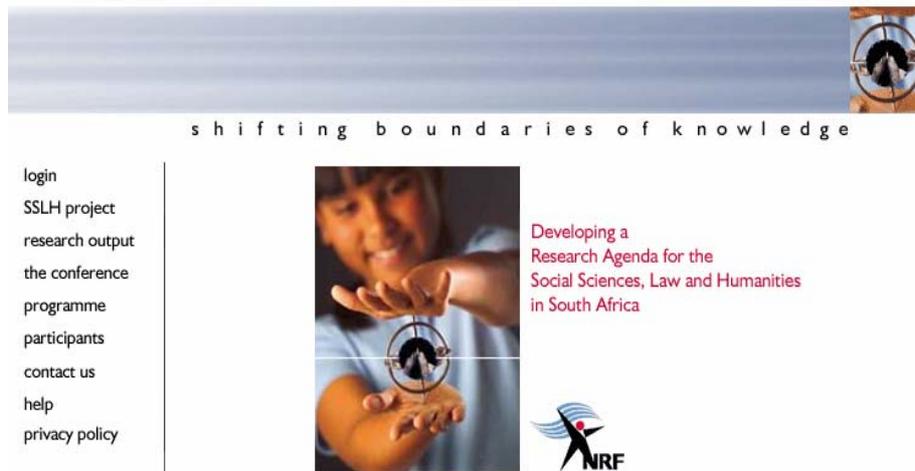


Figure 4: SBK online conference website

Information about the conference was accessed through the conference menu item. The conference programme information was accessed through the programme menu item. Other information available to the public was a list of the online conference participants, the organisers' contact details, help details, and privacy policy issues.

Figure 5, shows the login page used to access the online conference environment it also included hyperlinks to other additional information such as resetting a forgotten password and help files on how to login. Participants could login into the website using either a username created by the online conference organisers and password or using their e-mail address and password. The page also contained contact details if participants were having problems logging into the site.

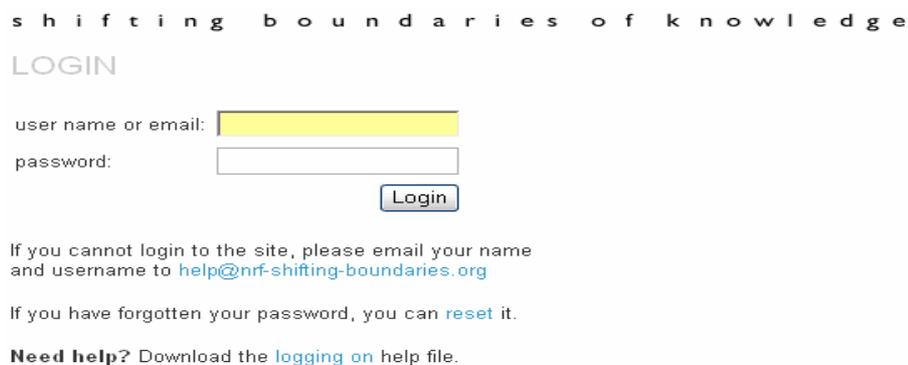


Figure 5: SBK online conference login

Once a participant had logged into the online conference, they could then decide in which of the several forums to participate in accordance with themes under discussion. Figure 6 shows the online conference environment and an online presence indicator stating ‘1 active user’ this indicates that participant (P1) has logged into the environment. Only registered participants had access to the online conference environment. It is important to note that this research study focused on asynchronous artefacts and not the impact of online synchronous presence indicators.



**Figure 6: SBK online conference environment**

The left section consists of information links that participants had to click to access a particular site. The online conference was designed in such a way that the facilitator provided access to information sources through direct or the Internet links. Clicking these links resulted in participants having immediate access to resources and different information depending on what was required at that particular moment. Examples of information sources included programme, forums, resources, participants, my profile, concept, and help. Some of these resource sites did include links of additional information.

The middle section of the site was made up of the core online conference phases namely, the welcome, exploring, consolidating, and farewell. The welcome, exploring, and consolidating forums links included dates when discussions in these forums took place making it easier for participants to see when and where to post messages.

The welcome link had hyperlinks to the opening address statement, the welcome forum, and the sand pit offering tips to participants. The exploring phase link displayed the six forums. The consolidating link had additional hyperlinks to the message from the online conference initiators, and participants used the consolidating forum to respond to the message. Other hyperlinks were to open space and my conference forums. The farewell

link took participants to several forums, my conference, consolidating, open space, and conference survey.

Participants had two ways of posting a contribution into a forum. The first way was by selecting the icons on the left side of the screen and the second way was by selecting the labelled forums valid for the date. The site consisted of additional information menu items; these were concepts, open space, and help. The next section discusses the conference forums.

#### 4.4 Forums of the SBK Online Conference

This section gives a detailed description of forums of the SBK online conference. The SBK online conference used a structured discussion system or forum system consisting of forums, ‘topics’, or ‘threads’ and ‘posts’ or ‘messages’. The online conference environment consisted of 13 forums; eight formal and five informal. Formal forums were environments where participants posted messages related to the conference objectives. Informal forums were environments where posted relaxed messages such as introductory messages. Each forum consisted of a number of threads; messages posted and date of the last posted message (see Figures 7, 8, and 9).

forums	threads	posts	last post
<b>Welcomes</b>			
 <b>Welcome</b> Welcome forum	6	37	19-Apr-2005
<b>Consolidating Phase</b>			
 <b>Consolidating</b> How can the SSLH research community respond to changes in the nature of knowledge production? To what extent is our work presently or our future research likely to shift knowledge and practice boundaries?	9	26	29-Apr-2005
<b>Open Space</b>			
 <b>Open Space</b> This forum is for participant initiated conversations that cut across or go beyond the scheduled topics. Start your own thread about Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge or join a conversation started by your colleagues	4	21	25-Apr-2005
 <b>Cafe</b> This forum is for relaxed, informal conversation about our lives and work :)	2	8	21-Apr-2005
 <b>My Conference</b> This space is for discussing our experience of the online conference	1	9	30-Apr-2005

**Figure 7: Forums of the SBK online conference**

**Exploring Phase**

 <b>Paradigms</b> What are the issues that are core to this theme? In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? In what ways could this theme serve SSLH in SA?	6	18	19-Apr-2005
 <b>Notions of Difference</b> What are the issues that are core to this theme? In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? In what ways could this theme serve SSLH in SA?	8	12	23-Apr-2005
 <b>Space and Place</b> What are the issues that are core to this theme? In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? In what ways could this theme serve SSLH in SA?	6	16	20-Apr-2005
 <b>Knowledge and Agency</b> What are the issues that are core to this theme? In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? In what ways could this theme serve SSLH in SA?	7	13	26-Apr-2005
 <b>Rules, Regulations, Entitlements and Social Justice</b> What are the issues that are core to this theme? In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? In what ways could this theme serve SSLH in SA?	7	20	25-Apr-2005
 <b>Technologies and Society</b> What are the issues that are core to this theme? In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? In what ways could this theme serve SSLH in SA?	5	6	19-Apr-2005

**Figure 8: Forums of the SBK online conference**

<b>Help</b>			
 <b>Sandpit</b> A place where we can play and learn about the environment	1	1	05-Apr-2005
 <b>Help Forum</b> Please post requests for help with the conference environment or process here. There will also be some useful tips for participants posted in this forum.	3	6	20-Apr-2005

**Figure 9: Forums of the SBK online conference**

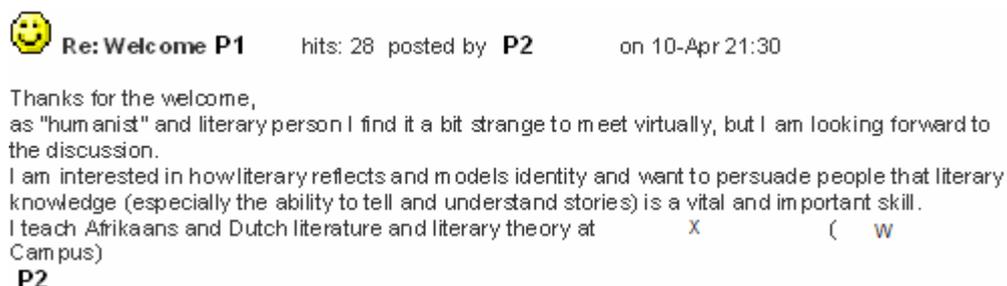
The figures show each forum, and either a set of questions, or a statement of comments to be addressed by participants in a particular forum. The online conferencing system was set up to enable participants to read items in all forums. The formal forums were named as consolidating, paradigms, notions of difference, space and place, knowledge and agency, rules, regulations, entitlements & social justice, technologies and society and open space.

The informal forums were named as welcome, café, my conference, sand pit, and help.

Communication in these forums was asynchronous and was not anonymous. At an allotted time for each session, the online conference facilitator invited participants to take part in informal discussions in the informal forums.

#### 4.4.1 Welcome

In the welcome forum, participants joined the online conference and familiarised themselves to the conference environment. Participants posted introduction messages and had informal discussions with each other. Once a participant has sent a message, other participants can read. Note the use of emoticons in the message shown in Figure 10. The message also showed the topic in which the participant was contributing, number of hits, the author of the message and date and time of posting.



**Figure 10: Welcome forum – message of introduction**

#### 4.4.2 Exploring

In the formal forums, participants answered the three questions stated in the exploring phase for each of the six themes. The exploring forums consisted of six sub-forums that participants used to post contributions as per theme under discussion. Participants used a message composition box or screen as depicted in Figure 11 to type or paste their contributions or messages/comments. The message composition box included emoticons, which were used to add emotions to the message. Participants were able to choose from a selection of icons available within the message box. The labels P1, P2...Pn are used to differentiate conference participants and F1, F2...Fn are used to represent the facilitator(s) in a threaded message.

Your name: P5  
 Your mail address: abc@abc.com  
 Subject: Re: Transformative?  
 Icon: [Icons: smile, sad, angry, neutral, etc.]  
 Message: I must say I have something of the same feeling, though I'm not a philosopher of science (and its very good to have you here). Some more ground clearing: the idea of transformation can either be a normative one, as in politics, or a  
 [Quote reply]  
 Options:  I want to be notified by e-mail of the reply  
 Link this message to an entry in the resources directory  
 [Preview] [Submit] [Reset fields]

**Figure 11: Exploring forums – message composition box**

Forums contained a list of topics/threads under discussion, and each topic or thread had a list of nested replies. Each topic or a threaded message had an author, number of nested replies, date, and time of the first and the last message posted. In addition, each replied message had the author, date and time of first and last message posted. The online conferencing systems allowed participants to either reply to an existing message, or post a new message within a theme under discussion. In Figure 12, ‘Transformative’ is one topic or thread in this forum. Replies to this message are indented; the first message was from F1. Then replies from P1, P2, P3, and P4 to this message are further indented. This creates an overall visual structure for the discussion that provides some indication of the order in which the discussion is building.

- threads - author (date & time of posting) latest post in thread**
- 📄 Opening Message - F1 (07-Apr 10:39)
  - 📄 Core Issues? - F1 (07-Apr 10:41)
  - 📄 Transformative? - F1 (07-Apr 10:42) 19-Apr 00:44
  - Re: Transformative? - P6 (14-Apr 14:26)
  - Understandings? - F1 (14-Apr 15:05)
  - Incomprehensible? - F1 (14-Apr 15:16)
  - Re: Transformative? - P9 (14-Apr 15:41)
  - Re: Transformative? - P13 (15-Apr 12:44)
  - Re: Transformative? - P6 (18-Apr 11:20)
  - Re: Transformative? - P9 (18-Apr 13:13)
  - Re: Transformative? - P6 (18-Apr 09:26)
  - Re: Transformative? - P5 (14-Apr 17:26)
  - A new topic? - F1 (15-Apr 10:32)
  - A place where things break down... - F1 (19-Apr 00:44)
  - 📄 Serve SSLH? - F1 (07-Apr 10:43)
  - 📄 Paradigms Summary: 15/04 - F1 (15-Apr 13:21) 16-Apr 12:46
  - Re: Paradigms Summary: 15/04 - P24 (16-Apr 12:46)
  - 📄 Socially Situated paradigmns - P15 (19-Apr 10:18)

**Figure 12: Paradigm forum – threaded messages with nested replies**

### 4.4.3 Open Space

In the open space forum, participants initiated discussions that cut across or went beyond the scheduled topics or themes. Participants were challenged to start threads or topics about shifting boundaries of knowledge or joined a topic already under discussion by other participants. The open space forum consisted of two other informal forums; café and my conference, which were informal forums.

#### Café

In the café forum, participants posted more relaxed messages. Files, clipboard contents, and image attachments could be added to each message. Figure 13 shows a threaded message with an attachment that was sent by participant labelled P25 and Figure 14 shows the picture of UCT, that participant (P1) attached to a message.

threads - author (date & time of posting)	latest post in thread
☰ From Where we are - F1	(2005-04-08 01:04) 2005-04-14 14:03
Re: From Where we are - P25	(2005-04-13 13:15)
Re: From Where we are - P9	(2005-04-13 16:26)
Re: From Where we are - F1	(2005-04-13 17:14)
Re: From Where we are - P6	(2005-04-14 14:03)
☰ Learning across disciplines - F1	(2005-04-20 15:55) 2005-04-21 11:28
Re: Learning across disciplines - P20	(2005-04-21 09:39)
Re: Learning across disciplines - P5	(2005-04-21 11:28)

**Figure 13: Café forum – threaded messages with nested replies**

attachments: IMG\_0015.JPG

---

😊 Re: From Where we are hits: 26 posted by P25 on 2005-04-13 13:15

the view at a sunny but chilly UCT



**Figure 14: Café forum – message with a picture attachment**

## My Conference

The my conference forum was where participants posted messages commenting on their experiences of attending the online conference and using this kind of communicating environment.

### 4.4.4 Consolidating

Participants used the consolidating forum to post feedback and comments to the message (speech) posted by the online conference initiators' before the conference ended. Figure 15 depicts contents of a message posted by participant P3. The participant was responding to the question 'Improving our Response' topic under discussion.



**Figure 15: Consolidating forum – posted message**

## Conference Survey

The conference survey forum is where interested participants clicked to take part in the survey, which took place after the online conference ended, from 29<sup>th</sup> April until 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005. Participants were requested to comment regarding the best and worst features of the online conference and participation in the evaluation survey was voluntary.

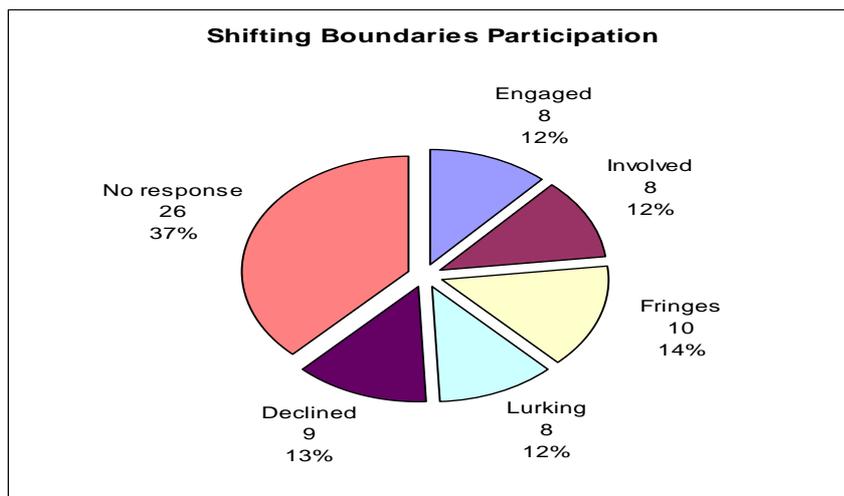
### 4.4.5 Help

For Help, a help forum and sand pit was provided. The online conference organisers used the help forum to post some useful tips for participants. Volunteer staff were on stand-by at certain times of the day to answer questions and provide guidance/assistance to participants who had problems with either logging into or using the online conference website. In the sand pit forum, participants played and learnt about the SBK online conference environment.

## 4.5 Participation in the SBK Online Conference

44 out of 69 invited researchers attended the online cross-disciplinary research conference (and five out of 12 invited guests). Nine potential participants indicated that they would not be able to participate and 26 did not respond to the invitation e-mail.

From the 44 researchers who attended the online conference, eight logged into the SBK online conference environment but did not post messages i.e. these researchers were lurking. Ten researchers logged into the conference environment and posted only one message. Eight researchers posted between two and four messages in forums and eight participants posted five or more messages. The online conference had only 16 active participants. Active participants refer to individuals who posted more than two messages. Out of five invited guests who logged into online conference environment, only one guest participated in the conference discussion sessions. Figure 16 depicts the overall participation of researchers in the SBK online conference environment.



**Figure 16: SBK online conference participation**  
(Source: CET, 2005).

Table 3 shows number of messages posted by participants, facilitators, and the invited guests as well as the number of threads in each forum. Most participants posted messages in only one or two forums, with eight participants and an invited guest posting messages in three or more forums.

The participation in this online conference was low because the conference took place during term-time a very busy time for both researchers and academics.

**Table 3: Forums activity**

<b>Forum</b>	<b>Threads</b>	<b>Participant messages</b>	<b>Facilitator messages</b>	<b>Guest messages</b>	<b>Total messages</b>
<b>Introduction</b> Welcome	6	15	22		37
<b>Exploring</b> Conference	39	38	43	4	85
<b>Consolidating</b> Consolidating	9	17	9		26
<b>Open space</b> Open Space	4	15	6		21
My Conference	1	4	5		9
Café	2	4	4		8
<b>Help</b>	3	2	4		6
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>192</b>

### 4.5.1 Logs

The online conference system had an activity log which recorded activities of participants. The logs were on number of replies a message had, number of hits, number of participants logged, and whether they contributed or not to a particular forum. Logs also recorded number of threads each forum had and dates of last posted message.

## 4.6 Gathering of Empirical Materials

Prior to carrying out the gathering of empirical materials, the researcher presented an ethical report to the ethics committee for approval to do the research. The gathering of empirical materials was of a qualitative nature in keeping with the general aim to investigate how social interaction occurs in an online cross-disciplinary research conference.

The researcher collected the empirical materials from several sources in this research study at different times. This included secondary empirical materials, recorded artefacts, and archival documents. The online conference website provided secondary empirical materials such as archival artefacts posted by participants during the online conference discussions. Other sources of empirical materials were the survey results recorded in the conference survey forum. Even though participation was low, the research is still valid because the collected empirical materials are enough to carry out an interpretive research

study.

## **4.7 Summary**

The chapter has provided an outline of the case study setting as well as a description of the SBK online conference environment. In addition, the chapter discussed the qualitative empirical material collection techniques adopted for this study. The actual artefacts collected are analysed in the next chapter using the analytical framework introduced in Section 3.4. In addition, chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the gathered empirical material.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. ANALYSIS OF ARTEFACTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter discusses the analysis of empirical materials (artefacts). The goal of interpretive case study research is to produce an understanding of the contexts of information systems and interactions between these systems/mediums and their contexts. In this research study, the researcher interprets artefacts of an online conference described in Chapter 4 so as to understand how social interactions do occur. Darke *et al.* (1998) assert that the strength of analysis in interpretive studies derives from the strength of the explanation of the phenomena based on the interpretation of data.

There are four sections in this chapter; the first two sections present a detailed analysis and interpretation of the online conference artefacts using CDA (Section 5.1) and SPIT (Section 5.2). These sections use the analytical framework introduced in Chapter 3. The analysis and interpretation of the empirical materials will assist in the answering of the research questions raised in Chapter 1. The third section continues to present the analysis of enablers and inhibitors of social interaction (Section 5.3). The next section of the chapter, Section 5.4 presents the discussion of enablers and inhibitors of social interaction. The succeeding section carries a review of the research questions (Section 5.5) and lastly Section 5.6 outlines the summary of this chapter.

#### 5.1 Analysis and Interpretation using CDA

In this section, the analysis and interpretation of the textual messages posted by participants into conference forums is carried out. Messages will be interpreted separately; the first interpretation will be of participants' messages and then facilitators' messages. These messages are artefacts or archived records of text communication. Poscente (2002) asserts that CMC conferences provide an excellent archived record of text communications and analysis of the text can provide clues to the occurrence of social interaction.

The text analysed using CDA is predominantly from the online conference forums. When analysing a section of text using CDA, generic and specific text genres and discursive types are acknowledged (Roode *et al.*, 2004). Thompson (2004) asserts that it is the usage and mixing of text genres and discursive types that provide units of discursive practice, and hence, discourse, with its unique power. The selected textual messages came from the

welcome, exploring, open space, café, my conference, consolidating, and help forums. There is a subjective judgement when identifying these text genres and discursive types (see Table 4) and applying them to sections of text (Roode *et al.*, 2004).

**Table 4: Acknowledged text genres and discursive types**

Text Genre (TG)	Discursive Type (DT)
1. Confidence	1. Neutrality
2. Factual Information	2. Corporatism
3. Humour	3. Technological optimism
4. Persuasion	4. Pragmatism
5. Uncertainty	5. Legitimacy
	6. Technocracy

In the context of this research study, neutrality discursive type (DT1) refers to discourses that are not taking sides on a topic of discussion. Corporatism discursive type (DT2) refers to discourses that imply collaboration, technological optimism (DT3) refers to discourses that acknowledges the technology’s potentials. The pragmatism discursive type (DT4) refers to discourse addressing practical issues. Legitimacy discourse discursive type (DT5) refers to authoritative discourse and technocracy discursive type (DT6) refers to technocratic discourse.

Table 5 depicts a sample of the analysis and interpretation of artefacts, available in Appendix A and B. The Appendices contain the artefacts as well as the CDA analysis and supported by interpretation commentary.

**Table 5: Sample analysis and interpretation of artefacts.**

Ref	Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
WF2 P1	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> ...a warm welcome! ...look forward to taking part in a lively and fruitful debate... My interest is to look at how effective peer-to-peer information and communication can improve knowledge for development, mainly in Africa.	Excitement	Confidence (TG1), Corporatism (DT2), Technological optimism (DT3), Pragmatism (DT4).	Calling other participants to improve knowledge development in Africa through ICT.
CS8 F1	<b>Improving our Response?</b> – What are the underlying weaknesses of the SSLH research community’s responsiveness? ( <i>Please try to answer this question from your experience and observations of SSLH research projects within and across disciplines.</i> )	Directive imperative - introducing a new topic for discussion	Legitimacy (DT5) Corporatism (DT2) Pragmatism (DT4).	Participants’ contributions needed for the new topic.

The WF2 and CS8 references in Table 5 refer to the section of text being analysed. In this

case, WF2 refers to the second message posted in welcome forum (WF), and CS8 refers to the eighth message posted in the consolidating forum. P1, P2 ...Pn refer to the relevant participants and F1, F2 ...Fn refer to the relevant facilitators. The different text genres are coded as follows: confidence (TG1); factual information (TG2); humour (TG3); persuasion (TG4) and lastly uncertainty (TG5). In the next sections the analysis and interpretation of messages posted in the online conference forums by both participants and facilitators is carried out. Even though participants of the online conference included invited guests, these guests were not permitted to post any messages only to read the posted messages.

### **5.1.1 Welcome forum postings**

#### **Participants' Messages**

The analysis suggests the text genre of confidence and the discursive types of corporatism and pragmatism. Some participants expressed keenness to take part in the online cross-disciplinary research conference discussions and considering that, researchers would use the environment to share information on how to improve knowledge. This is evident in messages below:

“...look forward to taking part in a lively and fruitful debate on the Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge....interest is to look at how effective peer-to-peer information and communication can improve knowledge for development, mainly in Africa.” [Ref. WF1/P1],

“Good luck for the conference. Viva disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity.” [Ref. WF14/P5].

The presupposition in the above messages illustrate that participants' discussions in the cross-disciplinary research consultation process will assist improving knowledge for development in Africa.

In addition, participants used the welcome forum to post introductory messages. An example of such message is shown below:

“...joining the conference from Y University, director of the Institute...” [Ref. WF27/P9].

The above message suggests the discursive type of legitimacy, a participant is stating power position held at the institution. This suggests that participant wanted to let other participants to be aware of his level of importance.

Forms of techno-centric towards technological optimism discursive type were noted in the following participant comment:

“Some login hassles which have finally, provisionally, been sorted out. I'm sure that we will be chatting in detail...” [Ref. WF33/P11].

Participants' expected to access the online conference website pages faster and read the public information with ease. Participants navigated the conference environment before posting introductory messages. Some participants faced problems as commented below:

“...the speed with which new screens load i.e. when I click on a thread...” [Ref. WF9/P4],

“...loading pages is extremely slow; much slower than we are used to...” [Ref. WF32/P10].

Participants' presupposition is to inform the online conference organisers that the online conference system needs attention and give participants information on how to overcome these problems.

The analysis observed some forms of uncertainty as in the case of one participant's comment suggests:

“...discomfort with the virtual form of presentation...seems to somehow make invisible the reality of intellectual production - email is so quick and immediate...” [Ref. WF19/P7].

The above message suggests that the online environment was alien to this particular participant. As a result, the participant might feel not part of the community and social interaction has been inhibited.

Some suggestions of the text genre of factual information were observed. Participants shared information on areas of expertise, credentials, and affiliation as shown in messages below:

“...teach Afrikaans and Dutch literature and literary theory...” [Ref. WF4/P2],

“I teach mainly film and literary and cultural theory - ...currently working on SA higher education policy (academic freedom, institutional culture) as well as longer term projects on Marx and critical thinking...” [Ref. WF17/P7].

The above messages do suggest that participants were using this forum to introduce themselves, letting other participants know of their areas of expertise and what they teach.

Some statements suggest that humour was expressed in a sarcasm manner this is evident in the comment:

“As well as 'blue skies' research...” [Ref. WF17/P7].

The discursive relations were also observed in participants’ messages suggesting traditionally academic discourse. The discourse suggests a technocratic expertise (DT6) towards technological optimism (DT3) and a demonstration of online conference pragmatic use (DT4), the collaboration of cross-disciplinary researchers to hold online discussions that would improve knowledge in Africa (DT2).

### **Facilitators’ Messages**

In this section, F1, F2 ...Fn represents messages posted by facilitators. Facilitator messages suggest confidence and enthusiasm. At the beginning of the online conference, messages were targeted at welcoming participants as they logged on to the conference site. This can be seen by the comments shown below.

“Welcome to both of you! Thanks for prioritising joining this process at the start of your very busy Mondays...” [Ref. WF12/F1],

“Hi Everyone! Indeed, a warm welcome to all. ...expect this to be a critical and lively debate...” [Ref. WF13/F3].

The above messages presuppose that researchers are usually busy committed with academic work and the period of the conference took place during term time and the busiest time of the academic year. In addition, Monday is usually a busy day of the week. The facilitator acknowledged the busy schedules of participants, this type of affirmation could have influenced the general feeling of “belonging” and wanting to contribute.

Other messages posted by F1 and F2 do suggest legitimated power relations in practice blended with the text genre of persuasion by giving instructions to participants on what to post in the forum. The facilitator neutralises the strong message of authority by including an emoticon to add warmth or emotions. This is evident in messages below:

“...please tell us a bit more about yourself in your profile when you are able to update it...” [Ref.WF3/F1].

“Let’s introduce ourselves to each other. Say something about what brought you here, leave a message of support or simply say hi😊.” [Ref. WF1/F1].

The facilitator’s demand for elaborated information could be to allow other participants accessing the messages to have an understanding of who was at the conference and their backgrounds. In addition, a possibility of collaboration can arise among them.

The techno-centric view towards technological optimism and technocracy discursive types was also observed.

“...to open the answer forum page in a new page right clicking on the link ‘reply’ and selecting ‘open page in new window’...” [Ref. WF10/F2].

Furthermore, some messages suggest that the text genre of factual information were present, the facilitator gave administrative information about the conference programme to participants.

“...Please note that Monday and Tuesday are allocated to making sure that people can come onto the site, read and post messages and navigate the environment.” [Ref. WF8/F1].

In addition, some messages suggest some blending of corporatism and pragmatism discursive types. The facilitator tried to encourage collaboration of all participants through calling for participants’ contributions towards topics of discussion to help find areas of research. This is evident in the message below:

“...we bring our disciplinary lenses, and discourses with us. ...participant can contribute some elements of the larger answers but we can only reach a larger view by sharing these...” Ref. WF22/F1].

The facilitators’ discourse suggests a traditional discourse of authority. The analysis has demonstrated legitimacy (DT5); the facilitator was using his/her position to guide/instruct participants on what to do. In addition, the analysis demonstrates a display of collaboration with which the online cross-disciplinary research issues needs to be discussed (DT2), and a show of pragmatic use of the online forum to post introductory messages (DT4).

### **Summary of the Welcome Forum Analysis**

Messages posted by participants and facilitators in this forum have shown the presence of some the text genres and the discursive types. Moreover, certain text genres and discursive types were identified in one set of messages and not in the other. The text genres of factual information, confidence, and humour and the discursive types of technocracy, technological optimism, corporatism, legitimacy, and pragmatism were present in both participants’ and facilitators’ messages. The text genre of uncertainty was present only in messages of participants and text genre of persuasion was present only in messages of facilitators.

The presence of corporatism and pragmatic discursive types in this forum suggests that both participants’ and facilitators’ called for collaboration in order to address cross-disciplinary research critical issues. This resulted in some participants posting their

contributions and this enabled interaction to occur. Participants felt it was practical to address meanings of themes first so that everyone is sure of what the actual meanings are.

In addition, legitimacy discursive type presence in participations' messages suggests that each participant was stating his/her level of importance within his/her institution as well as areas of research interest and expertise. The presence of legitimacy discursive type in facilitators' messages suggests that he/she had to use his/her position to give participants instructions on what to post and welcome them to the conference. In both cases, this resulted in participants posting their contributions and this enabled interactions to be present in this forum.

The use of parentheses to express emotions, the sharing of information on areas of research interest, and expertise, the expressing acknowledgement, collaboration, and facilitation suggest that interactions were present in this forum.

## 5.1.2 Exploring forums postings

### Participants' Messages

The analysis suggests a blending of the text genres of uncertainty and humour being combined with the discursive type of technocracy. Some participants were "sitting on the fence" and not participating because the online conference environment lacked visual and audio cues. In addition, participants rarely used graphical emoticons to express emotions and instead used the parenthesis. This could suggest lack of familiarity with the conventions used in the online conference.

"Part of the problem is with the medium ("the environment") poised uneasily between the permanence of print and and the informality of spoken dialogue. Does anyone have the courage to plant in the ashes? Not much inducement to hang out in the cafe, or play in the sandpit..." [Ref. KA12/P11],

"If "shifting boundaries" means "to shift" (as opposed to using the "shifting" as an adjective - or participle (help me out, P9 or P17!), what does that mean for us? ...think after all those disclaimers, I forgotten what I wanted to say! (Curses!) Oh yes, (I like the chattiness across "cyberspace!")" [Ref. SP5/P20].

Some participants were also uncertain on the effectiveness of the online cross-disciplinary research consultation process, in particular concerns were raised on the online conference themes. The following message shows concerns raised by one participant:

“So: What are "themes" such that they can make anything at all happen? What is a "boundary of knowledge"? What does it mean to "shift" one? Is there some simpler way of saying all this?” [Ref. PF4/P6].

Participant’s expectations were that some of the conference participants might be able to give possible solutions to questions being raised. In addition, these participants expected that some participants might have come across these problems within their disciplines and might share information on how the situation(s) were handled or tackled.

It was observed that in the exploring forums there was some blending of confidence and factual information text genres, which were combined with the discursive type of legitimacy. Some participants’ messages were informative containing facts and references from journal articles to support or validate their contributions.

“...have been pursuing the thinking of James C Scott (specifically in his book "Domination and the Arts of Resistance".) What has been fascinating for me is the "separation" he makes (according to levels of "oppression"” [Ref. RR20/P20],  
“...increasingly impressed by Schopenhauer's argument that in terms of perception ('representation' - including spatial, but also temporal and causal relations) subject and object are one: the upheaval, disruption (transformation?) follows from an irruption of desire.” [Ref. SP6/P9].

The above messages presuppose that researchers are reading current journals or books in order to keep up with new developments happening within their disciplines.

In addition, the analysis suggests pragmatism and corporatism discursive types. Some participants felt that the collaboration and inclusion of all researchers within the SSLH community was necessary in order to address the cross-disciplinary research issues. This is evident in messages below:

“...any attempt to achieve social justice will require a concerted, interdisciplinary approach as the law, the administration and the economy cannot operate in isolation...” [Ref. RR3/P17],

“I think you're right - there's a lot of pressure to "look busy", and to show evidence of being "excellent", "innovative", etc.” [Ref. PF/P6].

The analysis has shown that some of participants’ discourse was technocratic expertise (DT6), legitimacy towards importance of ones area of research (DT5). Researchers used the medium pragmatically to discuss the interdisciplinary approach (DT4). In addition, the analysis also demonstrates a display of collaboration with which the interdisciplinary approach to research is discussed (DT2).

## Facilitators' Messages

The analysis suggests that messages posted by the facilitator were authoritative, through the discursive type of legitimacy, on what participants had to post in the exploring forums. This is evidenced in the following messages from some of the exploring forums:

“What are the issues that are core to the theme of "Technologists and Society"?”  
[Ref. TS2/F1],

“How do other people here understand the question: "In what ways could this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?”  
[Ref. PF5/F1].

Furthermore, the analysis of these messages suggests an instructive approach towards factual information text genre. This is evident in [Ref. KA1/F1], [Ref. SP1/F1], [Ref. ND1/F1], [Ref. TS1/F1], [Ref. RR1/F1], and [Ref. PD1/F1], which were opening messages for perspective themes under discussion as indicated below:

“Opening Message – Welcome to this discussion on the theme: "Paradigms”. Here is a brief statement from the synthesis of the thought papers by online conference initiators: "We suggest that the notion of “Paradigms” has been explored in the submitted thought papers and that it constitutes a theme for SSLH research in South Africa. Examples through which Paradigms have been considered include: Humanities and Science, identity and power, modernity/postmodernity, ideology, theory and practice, public/private, human rights, social justice, equity, democracy, morality, ethics, values, ethnicity, nation building, diversity/difference/sameness, globalisation, race, methods of research.”

Lets start by considering three questions about Paradigms:

1. What are the issues that are core to this theme?
2. In what ways could this theme provide transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?
3. In what ways could this theme serve to inspire and support SSLH in SA?

There is a thread of conversation for each of these questions...” [Ref. PF1/F1].

Some forms of confidence text genre, which were blended with corporatism discursive type, were observed. The message below suggests that the facilitator acknowledges participant's (P13) collaboration towards the online consultation by posting. Moreover, the message suggests confidence by calling other participants to contribute to the topic of discussion. This was observed in the message below:

“Thanks P13 for making such a strong case for the importance of "Space and Place"! Does anyone else have an overlapping or competing perspective to share?” [Ref. SP3/F1].

The analysis also shows some forms of blending of the text genre of humour, the discursive type of technocracy and using emoticons to express emotions. The first message below suggests that there is minimal activity in this forum from researchers from the participant’s discipline; hence the facilitator calling for collaboration of participants to join in the discussion. The second message suggests that the facilitator is giving instructions to participants on how to get in touch with other participants who have contributed.

“Actually I was wondering if you have other colleagues with the same disciplinary base in Shifting Boundaries who want to join the conversation here 😊 ” [Ref. KA6/F1],

“...participants can also click on the participant names at the top of an open message...” [Ref. TS6/F1].

The facilitation discourse demonstrates, technocratic expertise (DT6), combined with the display of authority in suggesting topics for discussions (DT5). The facilitator’s discourse suggests a call for collaboration of cross-disciplinary researchers (DT2) and the realistic use of the medium to yield the expected results/outcomes (DT4).

### **Summary of Exploring Forums Analysis**

Messages posted by participants and facilitators in the exploring forum have shown the existence of certain text genres and discursive types. The text genres of factual information, confidence, and humour, and the discursive types of pragmatism, legitimacy, technocracy, and corporatism were present in both participants’ and facilitators’ messages. Furthermore, the text genre of uncertainty and the discursive type of neutrality were present only in participants’ messages.

The presence of corporatism and pragmatism discursive types in participants and facilitators discourse suggests that the calling of researchers’ collaboration to contribute towards discussions enabled interaction. Participants felt they belonged to a community and hence shared and sought information. Moreover, the online conference tool design itself made it possible for participants to share information and experiences with other participants as a result it was observed that this enabled social interaction to be present. Participants used parenthesis or emoticons to express emotions. In this forum, the lack of

visual and non-verbal cues, and the seeking of clarity on discussion topics suggests that interactions were inhibited.

### 5.1.3 Open Space postings

#### Participants' Messages

The analysis shows some forms of blending of factual information text genre and the discursive types of legitimacy and neutrality were observed. Some participants took the online consultation process as an opportunity to give suggestions on why cross/inter/trans-disciplinary research is possible or not. This also suggests that these participants used their levels of expertise in research areas to give possible suggestions. However, some participants were not taking sides on the topic of discussions. The presupposition in the second message is that there is no need to argue on what good research is as every research has its pros and cons. This is evident in the following messages below:

“...the most significant problems of the 21st C (poverty, inequality, conflict, environmental decline etc) will require the perspectives of more than one discipline to address them...” [Ref. OS5/P3],

“...there is no one kind of 'good' research; disciplinary and interdisciplinary, pure and applied, they all can be and are 'good' research (or alternatively 'bad').” [Ref. OS10/P5].

In addition, a blending of corporatism and pragmatism discursive types were observed. The message suggests that participants' contributions were towards finding ways of tackling the cross/inter/multidisciplinary research issues. Furthermore, the message suggests that participants need to be practical in making the possible suggestions of cross-disciplinary research. The cross-disciplinary research challenges are not standard issues but complicated due to the different disciplinary inclinations.

“...we've been discussing the disciplines as though they are normative structures which enable new knowledge and research, and even correct dead ends and wrong turns through a kind of internal logic or hidden hand...”[Ref.OS7/P5].

Furthermore, some forms of humour text genre were observed, some participants were sarcastic towards other participants. The message suggests that the participant felt discussions in this forum were too formal and needed to add some humour to lighten up discussions.

“...the NRF rated chaps tell me, particularly the Ps - the young future high flyers (there is at least one in this conversation).” [Ref. OS10/P5].

The discursive relations of corporatism and pragmatism were also observed in participants' messages suggesting a traditionally academic discourse. Legitimacy suggests ones level of expertise in a particular research area (DT5) and the neutrality discourse present in some participants' discourse (DT1). Researchers collaborated in their discussion on cross-disciplinary research issues (DT2) and posted practical suggestions (DT4).

### **Facilitators' Messages**

The analysis shows the text genre of factual information, so that participants can post comments to questions raised. This is shown in the following messages:

“...forum is for new topics started by conference participants. What aspects of Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge do you want to discuss?” [Ref.OS1/F1].

The assumption is that participants might have topics that needed to be discussed which were not within the conference suggested topics. The above message also suggests that participants were expected to post contributions answering the suggested question.

In addition, the analysis also suggests corporatism discursive type and some forms of blending of legitimacy and pragmatism discursive types were observed. The below messages suggest that the facilitator used his/her position of authority to encourage participants that they were welcome to suggest a new topic in relation to the online conference title. Moreover, these messages also suggest that the facilitator acknowledges participants' collaboration to post to the online discussions. This is evident in messages below:

“What aspects of Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge do you want to discuss?” [Ref. OS1/F1],

“...seem to require a new topic because they go right to the heart of the debates about how research communities make progress with existing and emerging research agendas.” [Ref. OS3/F1],

“Hi P26. You raise some interesting questions here including...” [Ref. OS12/F1].

The facilitators' messages suggest a fusion of usual facilitation discourse, the authoritative position (DT5), the collaboration of cross-disciplinary researchers (DT2) with acknowledging participants contribution as a neutral force (DT1) for more contributions. In addition, the pragmatic use of the medium to debate on interesting questions concerning the SSLH community (DT4).

## **Summary of Open Space Forum Analysis**

The analysis observed some presence of the discursive types and the text genres in messages of both participants and facilitators. The text genre of factual information and the discursive types of corporatism, pragmatism, and legitimacy were present in messages of both participants and facilitators. Moreover, the text genre of humour was present only in participants' messages.

The presence of corporatism and pragmatism discursive types suggests collaboration of participants, and practical suggestions on tackling research problems made participants feel a sense of belonging and a willingness to contribute to discussions. Furthermore, the presence of legitimacy discursive type suggests that both the facilitators' strong message of authority and participants sharing information and experiences in areas of research made participants contribute. As a result, this enabled interaction to be present in this forum.

Some participants felt a sense of community, facilitators encouraged participants to contribute, and the acknowledgement from both participants and facilitators enabled interaction to occur in this forum. However, some participants did not feel a sense of community, the using of prescribed topics, and comments by some participants that some topics were irrelevant does suggests that not much interaction was present in this discussion.

### **5.1.4 Café forum postings**

#### **Participants' Messages**

The following message in this forum suggests uncertainty, as the participant appeared confused about what was required and what to post in the discussion:

“...may be obtuse, or luddite, or both, but is anything happening here...” [Ref. CF3/P24].

Similarly, another participant commented:

“...professional epistemologist and philosopher of science, as well as a theoretical and empirical researcher, and ...don't know what "knowledge" or "boundary" are supposed to mean here...” [Ref. CF5/P5].

Assumption made from the above message is that researchers are intelligent individuals but are having difficulties to understand meanings the online conference themes/topics.

Some suggestions of the text genre of factual information and the discursive types of

corporatism and pragmatism were observed. Participants used the forum to share research problems being faced in their faculties as well as any other experiences. Furthermore, participants were stating the practical ways of dealing with these situations.

“...they have decided to appoint into the faculty a so called ‘Research professor’ (in the manner of name changes this has become a ‘research Fellow’ even though ...warned them about the Gender problems! Any suggestions on a “better” term would be greatly appreciated!). Anyway, these are some of our experiences. It is a hugely challenging (and fulfilling) environment...” [Ref. CF7/P20].

In response, another participant commented:

“Fascinating. We have exactly the same problem/issue...” [Ref. CF8/P5].

The above message suggests that participants were using the forum to seek assistance from each other on how to deal with problems being faced in their faculties. Participant presupposition is that the participant’s problems are a norm within academic institutions.

Participants’ discourses suggest that collaboration of all researchers was needed in order for cross-disciplinary research issues to come out (DT2). The pragmatic use of the online conference could yield new ideas and ways to solving the cross-disciplinary research problems (DT4).

### **Facilitators’ Messages**

The analysis of messages posted by facilitators suggests some forms of factual information text genre combined with legitimacy and technological optimism discursive types. The facilitator was guiding participants on what to post in the forum as depicted in the following message:

“Please describe the view outside your window and say anything else that you want to share about yourself...” [Ref. CF1/F1].

This message presupposes that the offices of researchers often have window views that could be shared with the conference participants. The facilitator’s assumption is that conference participants do have facilities that will enable them to carry out that task.

In addition, some suggestions of the discursive types of corporatism and pragmatism were observed. The online consultation process needed the collaboration of all participants to contribute into the forum so that the consultation process can continue. Moreover, the facilitator neutralises authoritative messages with the text genre of humour and the inclusion of an emoticon in seeking information from participants. This suggests that participants should not feel that they are being intimidated.

“What have you learnt from another discipline that is valuable to your research?

Your answers to one or both could be interesting to share 😊.” [Ref. CF6/F1].

It was observed that the facilitators’ discourse was traditionally a command giving discourse. The facilitator(s) used authoritative messages making participants to contribute (DT5). Participants’ collaboration was needed so that areas of research problems within cross-disciplinary could be identified (DT2). The analysis reveals a pragmatic use of the online conference to address cross-disciplinary research problems (DT4).

### **Summary of Café Forum Analysis**

Messages posted by participants and facilitators suggest that the presence of certain text genres and discursive types. In addition, some of the text genres and the discursive types were identified in one set of messages and not in the other. The text genre of factual information and the discursive types of corporatism, pragmatism, and legitimacy were present in both participants’ and facilitators’ messages. The text genre of uncertainty was present only in participants’ messages and the discursive types of technological optimism and neutrality were present only in facilitators’ messages.

The presence of corporatism and pragmatism discursive types in both participants’ and facilitators’ discourse suggests that the call for collaboration to discuss cross-disciplinary research issues encouraged contributions. As a result, participants were sharing information and experiences, and this enabled social interaction. The presence of legitimacy discursive type in facilitators’ messages also enabled interaction and technological optimism suggests that the tool design (the online conference environment) enabled participants to share pictures and enabled interaction.

The use of parenthesis and emoticons, the sharing and seeking of information by participants, the facilitation of facilitators, and the acknowledgement participants and facilitator gave to each other suggests that interaction was enabled. In contrast, some participants commented that the topics of discussions were irrelevant and this could have inhibited interaction in this forum.

## **5.1.5 My Conference forum postings**

### **Participants’ Messages**

In this forum, some participants expressed confidence in taking part in the cross-disciplinary research discussions, as the following participant comment suggests:

“...have enjoyed this electronic get-together for its novelty and for the quality of the support the shifting boundaries team has supplied...” [Ref.MC7/P9].

The above message presupposes that the participant acknowledges the online conference initiators and organisers for arranging the online cross-disciplinary research consultation process so that researchers can meet and discuss in this type of medium. The message also suggests that the participant appreciates the effort put into organising such innovation.

In contrast, a participant was critical of the intended purpose of the consultation and its outcome as evidenced in the comment below:

“...less convinced about the academic merits of the ‘outcomes’...” [Ref.MC7/P9].

The above message suggests that there is no credibility to the consultation outcome. It was expected that researchers’ outcomes from the conference could have been better.

Some messages suggest a techno-centric approach with technological optimism and the text genre of factual information was observed. The message below suggests that the medium and its design allowed geographically dispersed participants to attend. The message shows participants who would not have attended a F2F conference due to other commitments, attended this conference because of its online nature.

“...been participating in this conference on behalf of the Department of Safety and Security Management at X and due to the technical miracle of modern communications...” [Ref. MC5/P19].

Furthermore, some forms of the text genre of humour were observed. Some participants were sharing jokes amongst one another as evident in the message below:

“...cats can readily be herded if you have sufficient supplies of fresh anchovies...”  
[Ref. MC3/P21].

Some comments suggest some blending of the discursive types of pragmatic and corporatism. Some participants used the online cross-disciplinary research conference to collaborate with other researchers to address cross-disciplinary issues. Comments further suggest that some participants raised practical issues to address both the research and administration problems.

“...we can bridge some of these issues and, as suggested by the conference title, shift at least some of the boundaries of knowledge.” [Ref. MC5/P19].

In addition, some forms of uncertainty in some participants’ messages were observed. The message below suggests that the participant noticed minimal activity within the conference at that particular time.

“Hum, well - I hope we are not going to experience this conference as one of those events where everyone sneaks in at the last moment to slurp up the results of earlier discussion...” [Ref. MC2/P9].

A demonstration of technocratic expertise (DT6), technological optimism (DT3) on enabling geographically dispersed researchers from all disciplines to collaborate and discuss critical issues concerning research (DT2) and researchers using the medium pragmatically to hold cross-disciplinary discussions (DT4).

### **Facilitators’ Messages**

Some messages suggests the text genre of factual information, the facilitator gave participants instructional information of what had to be posted in the forum.

“This is the space for discussing our experiences of Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge including our highlights, surprises, learning, and frustrations...” [Ref. MC1/F1].

In addition, some messages suggest some blending of the text genres of confidence and humour. The facilitator added emoticons to messages and joined in the sharing of jokes.

““I am looking forward to hearing some of your fresh perspectives in the other forums too”. (Apologies for the constrained anchovy rations.)” [Ref. MC8/F1].

Furthermore, some comments suggest the discursive types of pragmatism and corporatism blended with techno-centric towards technology determinism. The facilitator acknowledged all participants who took part in the consultation process even though some participants did not post any contributions but merely logged into the environment. Messages further suggest that the online conference tool design enabled dispersed participants to participate as well.

“Thanks to everyone who was part of Shifting Boundaries Online - even if you only read a few messages. If you posted thanks for some stimulating conversation about SSLH research...” [Ref. MC9/F1],

“...participation across the oceans and several time zones away...” [Ref. MC6/F1].

Some messages of the facilitator suggest some forms of legitimacy discursive type. This suggests that the facilitator used his position of authority to inform participants of the next activity expected of them in the conference.

“... perhaps the results of the evaluation survey will give us some clues...” [Ref. MC9/F1].

The above message suggests that participants needed to participate in the conference survey so that feedback from the online consultation process initiative could be obtained.

The facilitator's discourses in this forum are a fusion of traditional facilitation discourse, SSLH community issues were discussed in collaboration (DT2), technocratic expertise (DT6), and technological optimism that participants would contribute (DT3) was displayed. The pragmatic use of the online conference to raise critical research issues (DT4) and the facilitators' position of authority (DT5) encouraging participants to participate in the conference evaluation survey is observed.

### **Summary of My Conference Forum Analysis**

Messages posted by participants and facilitators have shown the existence of some the text genres and the discursive types. The text genres of confidence, factual information and humour and the discursive types of pragmatism, technological optimism, technocracy, and corporatism were present in both sets of messages. Moreover, the text genre of uncertainty was present only in participants' messages and the discursive type of legitimacy was present only in facilitators' messages.

The discursive types of pragmatism, technological optimism, technocracy, and corporatism present in both sets of messages suggest that collaboration was needed from both parties to contribute to the online discussions and this enabled interaction to take place. Furthermore, the tool design made it possible for geographically dispersed participants to contribute at a time convenient to them. The presence of legitimacy in facilitators' messages suggests that participants were encouraged to contribute and felt being part of a community and wanted to contribute. This further suggests that facilitation and sharing of information by participants enabled interaction. However, in some participants' messages the presence of legitimacy discursive type does suggest that participants felt a lack of community, this inhibited interaction in this forum.

### **5.1.6 Consolidating forum postings**

#### **Participants' Messages**

It was observed that some messages suggest some forms of factual information text genre and legitimacy discursive type. Participants used the conference environment to share information with each other. In addition, they showed their level of expertise on how knowledgeable they were on current research within their respective discipline. In most cases participants had to quote the literature in order to put a point across as well as

referencing other researchers' work.

“...as Carspecken (1996: 1) describes...” [Ref. CS18/P21],

“See, for example, A and B's harsh critique of urban studies (in a recent issue of Public Culture focussed on Jo'burg).” [Ref. CS21/P11].

The above messages presupposes that participants are showing how well informed they are and aware of other researchers work within respective disciplines.

The analysis suggests some blending of persuasion text genre and the discursive type of corporatism. Moreover, some messages suggest a techno-centric approach towards technological optimism. Some participants' messages suggest that SSLH community researchers need to teach students additional skills i.e. entrepreneurial; bringing the real world to students. The message also suggests that participant is suggesting a new area of research that needs to be addressed. In addition, the message suggests that even though the participant had lost contribution several times, she/he still contributed to the online discussions. This is evident in messages below:

“We need to focus on fostering entrepreneurial skills, new thought, and give impetus and...” [Ref. CS23/P25].

“This is my third effort at writing what follows. The last two time I lost the messages when I went to preview.” [Ref. CS16/P19].

The second message above also suggests that participants are having problems with the design of the online conference tool. This is a note to designers of the online conference to look into this issue.

It was observed that researchers used the online conference forums to share information on problems being faced within their perspective disciplines, as commented by one participant.

“...opens profound problems and areas of concern in the so-called Universities (or institutes) of Technology” [Ref. CS19/P20].

The message presupposes that the emergent universities do have problems that need to be addressed before more problems crop up.

Participants' discourses evident in this forum are a fusion of usual problem solving discourse. Researchers displayed their areas of research expertise (DT5), technocratic expertise (DT6). Collaboration of researchers to discuss cross-disciplinary issues (DT2) and using technological optimism (DT3) discourse bordering determinism. Researchers used the online environment pragmatically (DT4) to raise critical cross-disciplinary research issues.

## **Facilitators' Messages**

Some suggestions of legitimacy discursive type were observed in this analysis. The facilitator used his position of authority to seek contributions from participants as well as drawing participants into cross-disciplinary research discussions. The following messages suggest that the facilitator wanted similar or different views to P16's contribution debated and hence called participants to contribute. This is evident in the following messages:

“What are the underlying weaknesses of the... Please try to answer this question....” [Ref CS8/F1],

“To all: Does P16's message strike a chord for you? How do you understand the notion of "the SSLH research community"?” [Ref. CS18/F1].

Forms of blending of corporatism and pragmatism discursive types were observed. Messages suggest that the facilitator was collaborating with participants in contributing to the cross-disciplinary research discussions. This is shown in the following messages:

“Thanks for this message which asks several important questions with significant implications for the notion of "the SSLH research community” [Ref. CS17/F1],

“Thanks for making the effort to get here...think that your call for us to "to look more closely at the kinds of problems we are even trying” [Ref. CS25/F1].

The above messages suggest that the facilitator assumed that participants were confused about the problems that the online consultation process was trying to address and that the participants' concerns had been noted.

Some messages suggest usage of the factual information text genre; the facilitator was giving useful information to participants on what to contribute in the forum. The following message suggests that the online conference had prescribed lists of questions, which participants were supposed to contribute to or comment on:

“...this consultation process includes varied opportunities for critical engagement and for informing and shaping an emergent vision of SSLH research. Online conference initiators have stated several contentions concerning the changing environment of SSLH research.” [Ref. CS2/F1].

The facilitator's discourse was traditionally facilitation towards instruction-giving discourse. The discourse was a display of facilitation expertise and authoritative (DT5) in the collaboration of participants to discuss on SSLH research (DT2). The facilitator used the online consultation process tool pragmatically to make researchers raise critical cross-disciplinary research issues (DT4).

## **Summary of Consolidating Forum Analysis**

Messages posted by participants and facilitators have shown presence of certain text genres and discursive types. Some of the text genres and the discursive types were present only in one set of messages and not in the other. The text genres of factual information and the discursive types of corporatism, pragmatism and legitimacy were present in both participants' and facilitators' messages. The text genre of persuasion and the discursive type of technocracy were present only in participants' messages while confidence text genre was present only in facilitators' messages.

The presence of corporatism, pragmatism, and legitimacy discursive types within participants' discourse suggests that the call for collaboration to discuss cross-disciplinary research issues encouraged contributions and therefore enabled interaction. The facilitators' authoritative position also enabled interaction.

It appears that the facilitation of the facilitator, the sharing and seeking of information by participants, and recommendations offered by participants enabled interaction in this forum. In contrast, participants commented that there was a lack of community, a lack of immediacy with the online environment. The usage of prescribed topics appeared to inhibit interaction.

### **5.1.7 Help forum postings**

#### **Participants' Message**

The following participant message in the Help Forum suggests some forms of factual information, uncertainty, and humour:

“Please help with an old fool who is struggling with the environment...” [Ref. HP2/P20].

The use of the term “old fool” needing help suggests that old people usually have problems with technology and hence need assistance. If provided the participant would be able to use the given information to solve the problem being faced.

#### **Facilitators' Message**

The analysis suggests that the text genre of factual information was used by the facilitators in this forum. The messages show that participants were aware that the online conference organisers had assigned an individual to deal with conference problems facing participants. In the message below, the facilitator assumed that the participant had three

options to choose in order to solve the problem.

Secondly, in the second message the facilitator assumption is that the participant has been given three options to choose in order to solve the problem.

“...forum will be monitored by H who is in charge of our helpdesk and by conference hosts...” [Ref. HP1/F1],

“There are at least three sensible solutions...” [Ref. HP3/F1].

### Summary of Help Forum Analysis

The analysis of messages posted by a participant and the facilitator has shown presence of the text genres of factual information and uncertainty. Moreover, the text genre of humour was present only in participants’ message. The presence of factual information text genre suggests that participants sought and shared information and acknowledged the assistance being offered, hence interaction was enabled.

### 5.1.8 Summary of CDA analysis

Table 6 details the summary of the CDA analysis, P refers to participant, and F refers to facilitator. In addition, this section discusses how enablers and inhibitors influenced social interaction and how these factors were derived from the CDA analysis.

**Table 6: Evidence of text genres and discursive types found in artefacts**

Text Genres and Discursive Types	Informal Discussion Forum								Formal Discussion Forum					
	Welcome		Café		My Conf.		Help		Exploring		Open		Consolidating	
	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F
Confidence - TG1	√	√		√	√	√								
Factual Info. -TG2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Humour – TG3	√				√	√	√				√		√	
Persuasion - TG4													√	
Uncertainty - TG5	√		√		√		√		√		√		√	
Neutrality - DT1											√		√	
Corporatism - DT2	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
Techno Opt. - DT3	√	√		√	√	√								
Pragmatism - DT4	√	√	√		√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
Legitimacy - DT5	√	√				√		√		√		√		√
Technocracy - DT6	√	√		√	√	√			√	√			√	

Ticks represent the availability of the text genres and the discursive types in messages of both participants and facilitators in all of the online conference forums.

The use of legitimacy discursive type by the facilitators, showed evidence active facilitation, was an enabler of social interaction. The use of corporatism discursive type by

both participants and the facilitators showed evidence of collaboration, which enabled social interaction. In addition, the corporatism discursive type was evident when participants shared and sought critical information on how to deal with cross-disciplinary research issues from one another and participants recommended possible options. Hence, the seeking and sharing of information and recommending options were enablers of social interactions. Furthermore, the use of corporatism discursive type by some participants' messages showed evidence that these participants felt a sense of community, an enabler of social interaction.

The use of pragmatism discursive type by some participants and the facilitators showed evidence that participants were keen to post contributions to prescribed topics and the facilitators used them to make participants post contributions. The usage and the presence of prescribed topics was an enabler of social interactions.

The use of technological optimism discursive type by some participants showed evidence of flexibility and convenience offered by the online conference. Flexibility and convenience in terms of time and place was a social interaction enabler. The use of factual information text genre by both participants and the facilitators, showed evidence of information sharing in areas of research interest and disciplines which suggests that relationships were built. Relationship building was an enabler of social interaction.

This section concludes the analysis of artefacts using CDA. The next section uses SPIT to analyse artefacts of the online cross-disciplinary research conference.

## **5.2 Analysis of Social Presence Indicators**

This section details the assessment of social presence indicators present in messages posted by participants and facilitators using SPIT.

### **5.2.1 Affective**

Firstly, the assessment sought to identify conventional expressions of emotion, or unconventional expressions of emotion, these include, repetitious punctuation, conspicuous capitalisation, emoticons. This is evident in the following comments:

“OK...” [Ref. PF4/P6],

“Well, as it happens your reservations about the rapid off the cuff response may be more widely held than you imagine 😊.” [Ref. WF21/F1],

““Viva liminality Viva!” (Or as we used to say "I am neither for nor against apathy!").” [Ref. SP5/P20].

Secondly, the assessment sought to identify teasing, cajoling, irony, understatements, and sarcasm indicators. This is evident in the following messages:

- “...Is it possible to herd cats?” [Ref. MC2/P9],
- “...may be obtuse, or luddite, or both...” [Ref. CF3/P5],
- “...an eye [yes, I have more than two]...” [Ref. CS5/P6].

## 5.2.2 Interactive

Firstly, the assessment of interactive social presence indicators was on the use of the reply feature of software, rather than starting new thread indicators. This is evident in messages below:

- “Re: Systemic and Structural Changes?” [Ref. CS15/P6],
- “Re: How do I...? [Ref. HP2/P20],
- “Re: Why Space and Place Matters...” [Ref. SP7/F1].

Secondly, direct references to contents of others’ posts as evident in messages below:

- ““...two fundamentally different ontological and epistemological positions” as P16 puts it...” [Ref. CS18/P21],
- “Hi all, Some of the questions raised by P5 in PF12...” [Ref. OS3/F1],
- “Let me start with your last point first, namely that we should engage...” [Ref. CS19/P20].

Thirdly, participants and facilitators asking questions to other participants or facilitators as evident in messages below:

- “How do you, for example, define "entitlements?"” [Ref. RR10/P18],
- “Is there something we are waiting for? Or do I just not know where to look?” [Ref. CF3/P5],
- “What have you learnt from another discipline that is valuable to your research?” [Ref. CF6/F1].

Fourthly, participants and facilitators complimenting each other or contents of others’ messages. This is evident in messages below:

- “I must say I have something of the same feeling...” [Ref. PF12/P5],
- “I think that we are in substantial agreement on this point” [Ref. OS14/P11].

Lastly, expressing agreement with other participants’ or the content of others’ messages. As evident in messages below:

- “I think I agree with both P13 and P6.” [Ref. PF10/P9],

“P19 has hit the issue on the head in terms of the deep epistemological and ontological divide...” [Ref. CS21/P11].

### 5.2.3 Cohesive

Firstly, the cohesive category looked for interactive social presence indicators that were addressing or referring of participants by name. This is evident in messages below:

“...help me out, P9 or P17...” [Ref. SP5/P20],

“Dear F1, Yes, P25, P29 en P1...” [Ref. KA7/P25].

Secondly, the cohesive category looked for indicators that address the group as we, us, our, group as evident in messages below:

“What links us is our common interest...” [Ref. RR14/P19],

“...we are not going to experience this conference...” [Ref. MC2/P9],

“...we are often talking past one another...” [Ref. CS16/P19].

Thirdly, looked for indicators of social presence in communication that serves a purely social function, greetings, and closures. This is evident in messages below:

“Hi to all!” [Ref. WF10/F2],

“Only an hour ago there were actually a few snowflakes fallin...” [Ref. MC5/P19],

“Good morning from a cold but relatively sunny...” [Ref. WF31/P10].

The next section gives a summary of the SPIT analysis

### 5.2.4 Summary of SPIT analysis

A sense of community was an enabler of social interaction and its presence can be seen by the usage of cohesive social presence indicator. The usage of “we”, “our” in the analysis suggests that participants felt a sense of community. The expression of agreement by participants with each other was an enabler of social interaction. Its presence can be seen by the usage of interactive social presence indicator. The usage of “I agree” in the analysis suggests endorsing behaviour among participants and this enabled interaction. The presence of Emotive and visual interactions enabled social interaction and its presence can be noted by the use of affective social presence indicator. The usage of emoticons and parentheses in some participants’ message suggests that participants used these features to express their emotions.

The next section presents the analysis of social interaction enablers and inhibitors in the

online cross-disciplinary research conference.

### **5.3 Analysis of Social Interaction Enablers and Inhibitors**

This section presents analysis of social interaction enablers and inhibitors evident in messages posted in forums of the SBK online conference by both participants and facilitators. The analysis of text messages has shown that some participants perceived the online conference environment as a social place where some participants chatted to each other and voiced their concerns. This is evident in comments posted by some participants:

#### **5.3.1 Social places/spaces**

“Hi and Greetings to some old friends and new virtual acquaintances! It’s good to see the possibilities of virtual conferencing being put to good use.” [WF25/P9],

“I have just been reading a fascinating paper by B of University of S in which he discusses the agency-structure dilemma (otherwise known, I think, as the individual/society divide).” [Ref. KA11/P28],

“F1, did you really draft this after 8:30 last night! Great stuff” [Ref. RR18/P20],

“It is no secret that the main planks of the NRF's research policy are Science and Technology, alongside a number of selected themes and focuses from or within the social sciences/humanities” [Ref. WF19/P7].

However, some participants did not regard the online environment, which uses open-ended discussions as a social place where issues concerning research problems can be tackled. This is evident in participant’s comment:

“...find it very difficult to contribute to such an open-ended conversation...” [Ref. RR10/P18].

#### **5.3.2 Sense of community / Lack of community**

According to Gunawardena (1995), the development of a sense of community is the key to promoting knowledge building. Some participants’ messages did show a sense of ‘intimacy or a ‘we are together’ feeling to take part in the online discussions. This is evident in comments below:

“...I should add - I also agree with P13 here” [Ref. PF9/P6];

“...following the debates and interactions, being exposed to the commitments and understandings of interdisciplinarity of fellow academics, understanding some of the challenges that some academics perceive’. [Ref SQ 15].

Nonetheless, some participants felt that there was lack of community feeling within the online conference since the SSLH community that the conference was referring to did not exist. This is evident in the messages below:

“...how the SSLH research community can respond to changes in the nature of knowledge. What SSLH community? When was this community discovered/created?” [Ref. CS16/P19],

“I most definitely do not think that there is an SSLH community at all. There's a patchwork of disciplines and shared problems and methods, and some overlap in our students, but no real community at all.” [Ref. CS20/P6],

“...we are often talking past one another and I also sense that this is because we operate in two fundamentally different ontological and epistemological positions...” [Ref. CS16/P19].

The first two messages above suggest that some participants did not believe in the existence of a SSLH community and this inhibited social interaction.

### **5.3.3 Sharing and seeking of information**

Some researchers participated in the online conference specifically to exchange and seek knowledge and important information related to cross/inter/multi-disciplinary. This suggests that some participants expected to collaborate with fellow researchers from other institutions. This is evident in messages below:

““I thought I'd share something of what has happened in The Faculty of Arts... [Ref. CF7/P20],

“...In archaeology there are some exciting discussions going on in fields like Indigenous Archaeology and Public Archaeology around issues of agency, ownership, reburial and repatriation of remains, and so on..” [Ref. KA12/P11],

“So: What are "themes" such that they can make anything at all happen? What is a "boundary of knowledge"? What does it mean to "shift" one? Is there some simpler way of saying all this? I'm very curious...” [Ref. PF4/P6]

In addition, some participants used the conference to inform other researchers of upcoming conference that they would be interested to attend. This is evident in the message below:

“...we A (B Campus), Univ. of X, Y Univ. of Z, and the main organisers, EFD are hosting op 26 and 27 May 2005 in M on Competitive Intelligence for Innovation.” [Ref. KA7/P25].

### 5.3.4 Clarity of topics

It was observed that some participants commented that the online conference topics and themes were unclear which suggests that these topics were open to many interpretations. Since these terms were not clearly stated, some participants would have been reluctant to contribute to unclear issues. As a result, this could have inhibited some participants from contributing or taking part in the online discussions.

“If "shifting boundaries" means "to shift" (as opposed to using the "shifting" as an adjective - or participle (help me out, P9 or P17!), what does that mean for us? ...think after all those disclaimers, I forgotten what I wanted to say! (Curses!) Oh yes, (I like the chattiness across "cyberspace!")” [Ref. SP5/P20].

“Hey all, I'm confused too. I really can't say I know what (most of) the themes mean. And I'm if anything less clear what they are supposed to be for. I'm a professional epistemologist and philosopher of science, as well as a theoretical and empirical researcher, and ...don't know what "knowledge" or "boundary" are supposed to mean here. ...very little way of making sense of the notion of "shifting"” [Ref. CF5/P6].

### 5.3.5 Prescribed/relevant topics

The prescribed online conference title, themes, and topics of discussions were observed to have enabled social interaction. It was further observed that some participants were able to post their contributions towards these prescribed topics and themes. This suggests that these topics and theme of discussion were relevant and of interest, as a result participants had something to contribute towards them.

However, some participants were very sceptical of the outcome of these prescribed topics. This suggests that some participants were not sure of the actual meaning of the online conference title.

“...don't know what "knowledge" or "boundary" are supposed to mean here. ...very little way of making sense of the notion of "shifting"” [Ref.CF5/P6],

Participants could not completely understand the meaning(s) of topics under discussion, this suggests that pitching up at an online cross-disciplinary research conference at the appropriate level could be difficult. As a result, participants who were unclear did not contribute to discussions and no information was shared amongst individuals. SQ8 below refers to the reply of the survey question 8; other replies to the survey questions are available in Appendix C. This is evident in comments below:

“The conversations were rambling and unproductive...” [Ref. SQ8].

Some of the formal discussions had more activities comparing to others; this may suggest that some participants contributed more to topics that were relevant to them. The less activities forum suggests that topics of discussion in these forums were irrelevant to some participants. This is evident from the comments below:

“Not too much activity...” [Ref. KA12/P11],

“Hey guys - why is this theme so quiet?” [Ref. TS5/P15].

The messages above suggest that the minimal activities and irrelevant topics of discussion inhibited social interaction.

### **5.3.6 Building relationships**

Some researchers participated in the online conference specifically to create social relationships. The building of relationships enabled social interaction. This is evident in messages below:

“Most participants have agreed to make their e-mail addresses available to other participants...” [Ref. TS6/F1],

“I would like to encourage you to make contact so that we can compare notes and ideas, but let us do this "offline" so to speak.” [Ref CS19/P20],

“Making new contacts. Finding that the participants shared a common interest in conducting research to make a difference, regardless of disciplinary and epistemic differences.” [Ref. SQ15].

The above messages suggest that the conference tool provided mechanisms of connections to enable participants find a shared space for shared interests.

On the other hand, some participants although invited to participate in the online cross-disciplinary research conference chose not to post messages. This is evident in comments below:

“...I'll try to lurk and watch...” [Ref. CS1/P6],

“...I didn't post anything...” [Ref. SQ8].

It was observed that in one of the above messages suggest some form of technological optimism. Possible suggestion is that participants were confident that the computer-mediated technology enabled them to read other participants' contributions. The presence of 'lurk' suggests technocracy discursive type, which suggests that the participant is familiar with technocratic terminology.

### 5.3.7 Emotive, verbal and visual interaction

The online conference medium allowed participants to express their emotions through using graphical emoticons that were implemented within the online conference system. It was observed that facilitators used most of the graphical emoticons whereas participants used parentheses. This suggests that participants preferred flexibility of using parentheses over emoticons. This is evident in messages below:

“(☺) But we are getting used to it...In the mornings it's usually better... A tip that helps me a lot is to select the link "read all messages in forum," [Ref. WF10/F2],  
“...it takes a technophile to be the first participant to post in an online conference (☺).  
Please tell us a bit more about yourself in your profile...” [Ref. WF3/F1],  
“Oy vey! Perhaps we need to develop a shared...” [Ref. CS18/P21],  
“...there's a lot of pressure to "look busy", and to show evidence of being "excellent", "innovative",” [Ref. PF11/P6],  
“Actually I was wondering if you have other colleagues with the same disciplinary base in Shifting Boundaries who want to join the conversation here (☺)” [Ref. KA3/F1].

On the contrary, some participants were sceptical of the initiative due to its lack of its visual cues compared to F2F conferences. Some messages suggest that participants wanted to invite other participants into a discussion, however, since the tool design of the online interaction was text-based only it was not possible.

Furthermore, it was observed that some participants stated that the online environment did not have visual interactive features that allow participants to invite other participants into discussions as it was observed in messages below.

“...I might have felt more comfortable to deal with and clarify issues with the opportunity for face to face meetings. I would not mind participating in face to face meetings if we dealt with salient issues in more directed and clear ways.” [Ref. SQ17].

“My experience of this online environment is quiet different from 'the real thing' - and I am wondering how one can call an active user into a chat...” [Ref. TS5/P15].

“...discomfort with the virtual form of presentation...seems to somehow make invisible the reality of intellectual production - email is so quick and immediate...” [Ref. WF19/P7].

The above messages suggest that some participants felt isolated since they were unable to

invite their fellow participants for a discussion. Furthermore, the last message above suggests that the online environment was alien to this particular participant.

In the analysis, the use parentheses some form of affective category were observed. This suggests that participants used parentheses to put emphasis on a word or statement. The presence of 'we' suggests that some forms of cohesive category; which suggests that participant was addressing the participating group as a unit. This suggests that although the communication was purely textual, participants and facilitators used parentheses and emoticons and found ways to convey paralinguistic emphasis and emotions.

### **5.3.8 Increased confidence and reduced evaluation anxiety**

The messages below suggest that some participants did not pay much attention to the spelling errors in their posted messages showing reduced evaluation anxiety. The message below suggests that some participants were not concerned with making spelling errors or being evaluated by other participants.

“...I'm not a philospher of science...” [Ref. PF12/P5],

“... (skills transfer - diagonosis - narratives etc)... [Ref.ND11/P15],

“...understanding their urban relality...?” [Ref. SP9/P13].

Furthermore, the online conference enabled some participants to talk about issues that they would have been reluctant to do through normal conversation or discussions. Moreover, some participants used the conference to criticise the online conference initiators.

“It is no secret that the main planks of the NRF's research policy are Science and Technology, alongside a number of selected themes and focuses from or within the social sciences/humanities” [Ref. WF19/P7],

“But this doesn't help the NRF, who has to do a little forward planning. Spare a thought for online conference initiator who, although it is impossible, has to second-guess where the action is going to be ...to stay ahead of the game” [Ref. OS10/P5].

The above statements suggest that some participants were concerned with areas of research the conference initiators fund favouring other disciplines from others.

### **5.3.9 Endorsing behaviour**

Participants acknowledged fellow participants for raising important issues and the facilitator(s) acknowledged participants for taking time to participate in the consultation process. This suggests that the different parties appreciated each other's contributions to

the conference and this affirmation could have influenced the feeling of wanting to contribute. This is evident in messages below:

- “I think I agree with both P13 and P6...” [Ref. PF10/P9],  
“P13, thanks for kicking off the discussion of core issues...” [Ref. ND4/F1],  
“Thanks P17 for you interesting contribution!” [Ref. RR4/F2],  
“Thanks F1, By the way, if...” [Ref. HP4/P20].

### **5.3.10 Recommending options**

Some participants took the opportunity to recommend possible options. Some participants made several suggestions concerning the SSLH research community as in the following cases.

- “Less arm-chair philosophy, and more dirty hands tainted with the dust/sweat and frustrations of fieldwork, in my view, is where the new paradigm(s) is to be found.” [Ref. PF8/P13],  
“I think these scenarios contextualise the issues that may have to be addressed if SSLH research is to be developed across the Higher Education sector...” [Ref. CS18/P21].

### **5.3.11 Facilitation**

Facilitation was observed to orchestrate the online discussions in all forums, in accordance with the role of facilitators. It was observed that facilitators kept discussions on track by posting comments and questions, and as a result probed participants to connect around shared problems and areas of discussions. It was also noted that the facilitators’ tone in all forums had expressions of politeness and gratitude as in the case of comments below.

- “Please describe the view outside your window and say anything else that you want to share about yourself.” [Ref. CF1/F1];  
“Please try to answer this question from your experience and observations of SSLH research projects within and across disciplines.” [Ref. CS6/F1].

The use of ‘please’ in the facilitators’ messages suggests a direct imperative, which often signifies that the writer is in a position of perceived power over participants of the online conference. This power may be commensurate with what is expected of a facilitator. The online conference facilitators moderated discussions by recognising all contributions initially, summarising frequently, and weaving ideas together. This suggests that participants could just read the summary and have a feel of where the online discussions

were heading. Furthermore, the facilitating of the conference was shared amongst three individuals, labelled F1, F2, and F3, with F1 being the dominant facilitator.

### **5.3.12 Collaboration and lobbying**

Participants attended the online conference for different purposes and expected benefits and this enabled social interaction as evident in comments below:

“My interest is to look at how effective peer-to-peer information and communication can improve knowledge for development, mainly in Africa” [Ref. WF1/P1],

“...opportunity I have been able to read and consider so many different issues related to our common endeavour of research.” [Ref. MC5/P19],

“I’m trying to help develop a community of researchers in cognitive and behavioural science spanning several disciplines and that is properly connected with the international community of researchers in these areas.” [Ref. CS5/P6].

The above comments suggest that some participants were participating in the conference to widen their areas of research. Moreover, some participants’ purpose of taking part in the online discussion was to find collaboration on particular areas of research.

Nevertheless, it was also observed that some participants were critical of benefits that the online cross-disciplinary research conference would achieve. This suggests that some participants were not convinced on the expected benefits and outcomes of the online conference. This is evident in comments below:

“A lot of discussion has been around demonstrating the absolute nature of this divide. I’m not so convinced...” [Ref. CS21/P11],

“But this doesn’t help the NRF, who has to do a little forward planning. Spare a thought for online conference initiator who, although it is impossible, has to second-guess where the action is going to be ...to stay ahead of the game” [Ref. OS10/P5].

### **5.3.13 Time and geographical convenience and flexibility**

It was noted that the asynchronous nature of the online forums provided flexibility for participants to post and read contributions at their most convenient time. In addition, the online consultation was spread over a period of three weeks to allow participants the flexibility to choose which days when to take part. This is evident in the comment below:

“I am writing this as most of you have already arrived home at the end of another long day...” [Ref. MC5/P19],

“...wish all conferences were this flexible...” [Ref. WF23/P8].

The above messages suggest that the nature of the medium allowed participants to take time to read other participants contributions in the other forums before contributing.

However, some participants were sceptical of the initiative due to its lack of immediacy, felt that the very thought of articulating ones thoughts in writing for the conference appeared to involve cognitive processing This is evident in the message below:

“...e-mail is so quick and immediate, it doesn't really seem to be the form for considered thinking ...the pleasures or fantasies of the 'immediacy' offered by virtual communication seem a little thin!. [Ref. WF19A/P7].

Furthermore, it was observed that some participants were not comfortable interacting in a text based online environment, as more verbal communicators feel as one participant's comment suggests.

“Part of the problem is with the medium ("the environment") poised uneasily between the permanence of print and and the informality of spoken dialogue.” [Ref. KA12/P11].

It was also observed that messages were reflective, and long, this could be due to the asynchronous nature of the medium. This suggests that participants were able to accumulate data and references with which to substantiate their contributed arguments.

It was observed that the use of text based interaction discourse allowed for automatic recording and storing of all participants' messages posted. This suggests that the permanent record of messages gave participants easy access to other participants' ideas and suggestions. Furthermore, the text-based nature of communication allowed messages posted by participants to be stored in the message postings database and be reviewed by other participants and allowed participants time to catch up and reflect on contributed messages. The online conference text messages acted as a resource of information. This is evident in comment made by some participants:

“I have read all the messages regarding the paradigm topic and I must say it sound just like normal.” [Ref. OS4/P22].

“I've been reading the posts thus far...” [Ref. CS18/P21].

Some participants were able to log on remotely and read online conference postings from locations that can be determined by the user as in the case of one participant's comment:

“I am writing this as most of you have already arrived home at the end of another long day sitting in my office in the middle of a cool but somewhat blue-sky afternoon in North Dakota, USA.” [Ref. MC5/P19].

### **5.3.14 Social presence**

It was noted that some participants complemented each others contributions to the cross-disciplinary research discussions. This is evident in the messages below:

“I must say I have something of the same feeling...” [Ref. PF12/P5],

“I think that we are in substantial agreement on this point” [Ref. OS14/P11].

The message below suggests that some participants posted sarcastic, teasing and understatement comments onto online conference environment.

“...may be obtuse, or luddite, or both...” [Ref. CF3/P5],

“As well as 'blue skies' research...” [Ref. WF17/P7].

“...an eye [yes, I have more than two]...” [Ref. CS5/P6].

The next section details a discussion of social interaction enablers and inhibitors that were derived from the CDA and SPIT analysis.

## **5.4 Discussion of Social Interaction Enablers and Inhibitors**

Table 7 presents evidence of enablers and inhibitors of social interaction that were derived from the analysis of artefacts using the analytical framework. Inhibitors and enablers represented in boldface were identified in this study and were not identified in the literature (see Table 1). The discussion of social interaction enablers and inhibitors is done in relation to the literature findings.

**Table 7: Social interaction: enablers and inhibitors with references**

<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>			
<b>Enablers</b>	<b>Ref. section(s)</b>	<b>Inhibitors</b>	<b>Ref. section(s)</b>
Social places/spaces	5.3.1	<b>Lack of community</b>	5.3.2
Sense of community (affiliation)	5.3.2	Lack of immediacy	5.3.13
Sharing and seeking information	5.3.3	Lack of emotive, verbal and visual interaction	5.3.8
<b>Prescribed/Relevant topics</b>	5.3.5	Irrelevant topics	5.3.5
Building relationships	5.3.6	<b>Clarity of topics</b>	5.3.4
Emotive, verbal and visual interaction	5.3.7	<b>Prescribed topics</b>	5.3.5
Increased confidence and reduced evaluation anxiety	5.3.8	<b>Minimal activities</b>	5.3.5
Endorsing behaviour	5.3.9	Alien environment	5.3.7
Recommending options	5.3.10	Isolation	5.3.7
Facilitation	5.3.11		
<b>Collaboration and lobbying</b>	5.3.12		
Time and geographical convenience and flexibility	5.3.13		
Social presence	5.3.14		

### 5.4.1 Social places/spaces

In F2F conferences, informal chats takes place during coffee or lunch breaks and are between individuals. In contrast, in an online conference all messages (including informal forum discussions) are archived. While participants used the formal forums to post their contributions towards the online conference themes, they used the informal forums differently. Participants used the welcome informal forum to post introductory messages. Some participants also used this forum to notify the online conference organisers of problems they faced when they were accessing the online conference environment and that they were uncomfortable interacting online. Some participants used the other informal forums, to voice their concerns and opinions on they way themes of the conference were chosen while others stated that they were excited about the initiative and looking forward to interacting online.

The CDA analysis has shown that the text genre of confident was only present in the informal discussions (see Table 6) this suggests that participants were excited to hold other type of discussions that were not related to online conference themes. The text genre of factual information was also present in the informal forums where participants not only posted introductory messages, but also shared information on their areas of research

expertise. In addition, some of the discursive types present in the informal forums were corporatism, legitimacy, and pragmatism; participants were collaborating in informing one another on their areas of research interests, upcoming projects, and their levels of responsibilities in their departments. This supports Taylor's (1997) statement that the text-based nature of an online environment enables individuals to discuss issues that they would have been reluctant to do within F2F environment.

#### **5.4.2 Sense of community/Lack of community**

The analysis has shown that participants were able to relate to problems being faced with other researchers in other disciplines and did agree on several issues and challenges faced when doing cross-disciplinary research. Some participants' expectations were that other researchers taking part in the consultation might have answers to questions that were raised. Hence, the sense of community was a useful enabler of social interaction in the online conference environment.

The CDA analysis has revealed the presence of corporatism discursive type in most participants' messages, which demonstrated that these participants identified with the community of researchers. The research collaboration discussions were mainly posted in the formal forums. Both participants and the facilitator(s) perceived each other as belonging to a community and the SPIT analysis showed the usage of 'we' in addressing each other does confirm this. This supported Kollok & Smith's (1999) remark that a community of discussions are usually developed and shaped by individuals' sense of whom they are interacting. Sense of community not only increases persistence of individuals in online conferences, but also enhances information flow, group commitment, collaboration, and discussion satisfaction (Dede, 1996; Wellman, 1999). Nonetheless, it was found that some participants felt that there was lack of community within the cross-disciplinary research conference, and this inhibited social interaction. Some participants commented that the SSLH community, the online conference was promoting did not exist whilst others questioned the actual meaning of the term the SSLH community.

#### **5.4.3 Sharing and seeking of information**

The analysis has revealed that some participants' used the online consultation as an opportunity to share information with each other. Information shared was on administration activities happening within respective disciplines and areas of research expertise. In addition, some participants sought solutions to problems being faced in their

disciplines.

In the CDA analysis, it was found that corporatism and pragmatism discursive types were present in messages of participants and facilitators, who were collaborating by sharing information with each other and raising cases in getting the job done. In addition, the analysis revealed technological optimism discursive type in most participants' messages suggest that participant were optimistic that the technology opportunities available would as stated by Salmon (2000), give them immediate access and fast exchange of information.

The SPIT analysis revealed that some participants were either asking questions to other participants or facilitator(s), and facilitator(s) were asking questions to participants. The analysis also found that participants and the facilitator made direct reference to contents of other participants' contributions when replying to posted questions. This is an indication that information is being shared and sought. This strongly suggests that sharing and seeking of information was an attribute of social interaction. This supports Lakhani & von Hippel (2002) statement that individuals participate in online consultation discussions for the purpose of attaining information and other resources relevant to their work interests.

#### **5.4.4 Clarity of topics**

In the analysis, it was found that some participants sought clarity from the facilitator and other participants on the online conference themes and topics. This suggests that participants were unclear on the meaning of certain topics, which were open to many interpretations.

It was found that in the CDA analysis some forms of uncertainty text genre were evident in some messages of participants, participants required clarity on the actual meanings of themes and topics. In the SPIT analysis, it was found that participants were asking questions to the facilitator to clarify the actual meaning of topics. This suggests that the lack of clarity on topics of discussions by participants attributed to inhibiting social interaction in the online cross-disciplinary research conference.

#### **5.4.5 Prescribed, relevant and irrelevant topics**

In the analysis, it was found that the use of prescribed topics in the online conference enabled some participants to choose which topics to contribute. This suggests that some participants found that these prescribed topics were interesting and relevant areas of research. The prescribed topics were mainly used in the formal forums and participants

could only start their own topics in the informal forums.

The CDA analysis found that corporatism and pragmatism discursive types were present in messages of both participants and facilitators. The facilitator(s) encouraged participants to contribute to these topics and participants did post their contributions to them. Contributions were relevant to the prescribed topics and the SPIT analysis, which showed the high usage of the reply features in the formal forums, confirms this. According to Kollock & Smith (1999), if knowledge being shared is relevant, participants tend to contribute and this enables social interaction to take place.

However, the analysis has also shown that some participants felt that the prescribed topics were too abstract and ambiguous. Some participants found that these topics were either not related to their research area or irrelevant; as a result, these participants felt that there is no point in contributing. Moreover, the availability of prescribed topics resulted in some of the formal forums having fewer activities. It can be suggested that task design that includes inappropriate topics does inhibit social interaction. This confirms that fewer activities within a forum in an online conference do inhibit social interaction. According to Krejins *et al.* (2003), if knowledge being discussed is irrelevant, individuals are disinclined to participate because it becomes difficult to distinguish between the wheat and the chaff; and this inhibits social interaction.

#### **5.4.6 Building relationships**

In the analysis, it was found that an intention of some participants in taking part in the online conference was to build relationships. The corporatism and pragmatism discursive types found in the CDA analysis of participant and facilitator messages has shown that collaboration and community encouraged the building of relations. Some participants in fact stated that an intention of attending the online conference was to make contacts with other researchers. Some participants sought alliance with other participants by making their e-mail addresses available so that they could be contacted. The facilitator sought cooperation from participants to update their personal profiles so that other participants could see their areas of research. The usage of complimenting remarks in the SPIT analysis confirms that participants were acknowledging other participants on raising important issues related to the cross-disciplinary research. In addition, the analysis also found that participants expressed agreement with other participants, addressed or referred to other participants by their name(s) and directly referenced contents of other participants' postings. Kollock & Smith (1999) assert that relationship building is usually

shaped by an individuals' sense of whom they are interacting with.

#### **5.4.7 Emotive, verbal and visual interaction**

It was found that the facilitators used most of the graphical emoticons whereas participants preferred to use parentheses due to lack of verbal and visual cues of the medium. The CDA analysis found that the facilitator used smiley emoticons to add emotions to messages and questions posted to participants. Participants preferred using parentheses in their messages.

The SPIT analysis found that some participants used parentheses and conspicuous capitalisation and facilitators used emoticons to express emotions and to make emphasis on a point being made. Emoticons and parentheses were used in messages to express their emotions this therefore helped in effective communication, and hence enabled social interaction. This is in agreement with Rezabek & Cochnour's (1998) who stated that emoticons act as visual cues within an online conference and are fundamental components of being human, which enables individuals to feel happy, angry, proud, or motivate actions, and make meaning to enrich human experience.

However, the analysis has shown that the perception of some participants of the online medium was that it lacked visual and audio context cues. These participants stated that the medium did not provide the actual presences; the responsiveness embodied in dynamics of visual interaction and the gaze thus inhibited social interaction. This supported past research (Romiszowski & Mason, 1996; Garrison *et al.*, 2000; Sit *et al.*, 2005) that lack of visual cues presents challenges for participants to establish social presence.

#### **5.4.8 Increased confidence and reduced evaluation anxiety**

In this research study, it was found that participants were not concerned about making spelling errors/mistakes in their posted messages. This might suggested that participants were free to make mistakes without the fear of being assessed by other participants.

In the CDA, it was found that technological optimism discursive type was present in some participants' messages. This may suggests that participants were hoping that the technological features of the online conference system would be able to check their spelling errors as they posted their contributions. Studies by Taylor (1997) and Sproull & Kiesler (1991) showed that there is reduced evaluation anxiety in a CMC environment due to the lack of social context cues and this enabled social interaction. Even though McGugan (2002) argues that evaluation anxiety does inhibit social interaction, in this

study no evidences were found to suggest that participants of the conference experienced evaluation anxiety.

#### **5.4.9 Endorsing behaviour**

It was found that participants of the online cross-disciplinary research conference acknowledged each other's contributions. The facilitator(s) also acknowledged participants for raising important issues and taking part in the online consultation process.

The CDA analysis found that corporatism discursive type was present in messages of both participants and facilitators. It was found that participants supported each other for raising or pointing out an important issue related to doing cross-disciplinary research. In addition, facilitator(s) acknowledged participants for taking time from their hectic academic schedules to participate in the online discussions.

The SPIT analysis revealed that some participants expressed agreement with each other's contributions, and the facilitator expressed agreement to participants' contributions. The usage of 'we' when addressing other participants and expressing gratitude suggests endorsing behaviour and this enabled social interaction. According to Lee *et al.* (2001), endorsing behaviour does provide a great deal of value to online conference participants.

#### **5.4.10 Recommending options**

The analysis has shown that some participants took the online consultation process as an opportunity to recommend possible research problem areas that need to be addressed. The recommending of options suggests that some participants thought that important areas of research were being ignored.

In the CDA analysis, it was found that pragmatism and corporatism discursive types were present in both messages of participants and facilitators. This suggested that some participants recommended that the SSLH community should include all parties of the community when addressing the cross-disciplinary research issues. Other recommendations were that the NRF should not only fund science and technology research but literacy related research too. This implied that the proposed literacy projects and research are ignored by the research-funding organisation. The SPIT analysis revealed that some participants were directly referencing contents of other participants' contributions when recommending options to help solve problems being faced by other participants in their disciplines. Lee *et al.* (2001) explain that recommending options adds value to participants participating in an online environment.

### **5.4.11 Facilitation**

Facilitators' comments and questions encouraged and guided participants to post their contributions. It was found that the facilitator summarised discussion issues often. In addition, the facilitator welcomed participants to the online discussions, directed them on what to post in each forum, and tried to clarify any problem faced by participants.

The CDA analysis found that the presence of 'please' in some the facilitator's authoritative messages encouraged participants to post contributions towards the online discussions. In addition, the presence of the corporatism discursive type suggests that the facilitator sought collaboration from participants to either to comment on other participants contributions or raise their own critical issue(s). The SPIT analysis has shown that the facilitator posted questions directed to participants so that they could contribute, complimented participants for contributing and greeted, addressed or referred to participants by name. This finding concurs with Hoostein's (2002) remark that facilitation probes participants to contribute towards a discussion in an online environment. Facilitation set the pace of discussions by the posted questions that required contributions from participants (Rohfeld & Hiemstra, 1995) and this strongly enabled social interaction.

### **5.4.12 Collaboration and lobbying**

The analysis found that participants' expected purpose and benefit of attending the online conference was to find collaboration. In addition, other participants' purpose was to lobby for possible research funding. Some participants posted suggestions on possible areas needing research and hence possibly funding from the NRF.

The CDA analysis found that corporatism and pragmatism discursive type were present in participant's messages. As well as finding possible research partnership, some participants were lobbying for research funding. The SPIT analysis of artefacts has revealed that some participants expressed agreement with other participants' contributions. This suggested that possible collaboration could have emerged from it, and this enabled social interaction.

### **5.4.13 Time and geographical convenience and flexibility**

It was found that the asynchronous nature of the medium allowed participants the flexibility and time to accumulate information with references so as to substantiate their contributions. Furthermore, participants were able to access the online discussion messages at a time convenient for them and read other participants' messages.

The CDA analysis of artefacts revealed that the presence of technological optimism and technocracy discursive types in messages of participants. Geographically dispersed participants were confident that the technological opportunities of the online environment made it possible for them to post their contributions, and this was a useful enabler of social interaction. The SPIT analysis found that the use of the software's reply feature suggests that it was convenient for some participants to post their contributions to online conference threads. Participants could pick out threads of ideas emerging from cross-disciplinary research discussions and relate emerging themes in different ways to deepen understanding of the topic. According to Wright (2003), asynchronous nature of the discussion ensures no waiting to contribute to the discussion or ask questions.

The analysis has shown that participants not only contributed to the online discussions but also read fellow participants' messages and commented towards them. Time and space allowed participants to log onto the online conference environment to contribute. The text-based nature of interaction allowed participants to take time to organise their thoughts before contributing.

The CDA analysis has shown that technological optimism and technocracy discursive types were present in messages of participants and facilitators. The tool design of the medium recorded and archived all posted messages so that all participants and other invited guests could be able to access them. According to Minshull (2004), recorded and archived online conference proceedings are kept after the conference has ended. Hence, participants' contributions tend to be more thoughtful and clear than spontaneous remarks made in the heat of a verbal discussion (Wright, 2003).

Nonetheless, some participants commented that there was lack of immediacy with the medium and that they preferred e-mail since it is quicker as it does not require considered thinking. In addition, some participants commented that the use of an online medium implies preparation, drafting and redrafting and the possibility of altering and adjusting, refining and deepening the articulation of ideas. This finding supports past research (Hara & Kling, 1999; Petrides, 2000; Ellis, 2001) that lack of immediacy in getting responses back constrained participants to contribute and hence inhibited social interaction.

#### **5.4.14 Social presence**

The social presence indicators assessment found that most indicators in the categories of affective, interactive and cohesive were present in both participants' and facilitators' messages. The analysis identified the 11 social presence indicators as suggested in a

research conducted by Garrison *et al.* (2003). It was observed that endorsing behaviour and agreeing with each other increased social presence. This also supports Ubon & Kimble's (2003) remark that social presence is a significant factor in improving instructional effectiveness as it helps increase social interaction. Lack of social presence in an online environment can lead to frustration and less effective discussions. Furthermore, one of the important factors related to sense of community as commented by Rovai (2002), is social presence and Garrison & Anderson (2003) assert that the formation of community requires a sense of social presence among participants.

#### **5.4.15 Enablers and Inhibitors not found**

The analysis has revealed that most of social interaction enablers identified in the literature (see Table 2) were present, however social activities identified in the literature review was not evident. A possible suggestion was that the cross-disciplinary research conference system did not include any social activities for participants.

In the analysis, it was found that some inhibitors of social interaction identified in the literature (Table 2) were also identified in this research study. The literature review, found that large groups and reduced anxiety does inhibit social interaction, however the analysis of artefacts did not find them. A possible suggestion was that attendance to the online cross-disciplinary research conference was restricted only to invited participants who were each given a login name and a password to access the online conference environment. The next section reviews the research questions.

### **5.5 Review of research questions**

This section carries out a review of the research questions stated in Section 1.4. Research question 1 was: *What enables and inhibits social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference?* The identified social interaction enablers and inhibitors in this study are shown in Table 8. The new enablers and inhibitors identified are in boldface.

Research question 2 was: *What social presence indicators are present in artefacts of the online cross-disciplinary research conference?* The social presence indicators identified were 11 indicators from the three categories of affective (Section 5.2.1), interactive (Section 5.2.2), and cohesive (Section 5.2.3). Research question 3 was: *What design features facilitates social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference?* The study found that several design features did facilitate social interaction these include,

the availability of informal forums as social places/spaces. This feature enabled participants to post relaxed comments i.e. introductory messages. The second design feature was the use of prescribed topics of discussions, and the last feature was the facilitation.

**Table 8: Identified social interaction enablers and inhibitors**

<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>	
<b>Enablers</b>	<b>Inhibitors</b>
Social places/spaces	<b>Lack of community</b>
Sense of community (affiliation)	Lack of immediacy
Sharing and seeking information	Lack of emotive, verbal and visual interaction
<b>Prescribed/Relevant topics</b>	Irrelevant topics
Building relationships	<b>Clarity of topics</b>
Emotive, verbal and visual interaction	<b>Prescribed topics</b>
Increased confidence and reduced evaluation anxiety	<b>Minimal activities</b>
Endorsing behaviour	Alien environment
Recommending options	Isolation
Facilitation	
<b>Collaboration and lobbying</b>	
Time and geographical convenience and flexibility	
Social presence	

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter presented an analysis and interpretation of artefacts using analytical framework stated in Section 3.4 using CDA and SPIT. Table 6 depicted the text genres and discursive types acknowledged in messages of both participants and facilitators. The SPIT analysis found that the online conference artefacts did contain several social presence indicators such as expressing emotions, quoting other participants' messages, asking questions, complementing others' postings and expressing agreement to other participants' contribution(s).

A discussion of enablers and inhibitors found in the literature review but not in this study was given as well as new enablers and inhibitors identified in this study but not in the literature. Lastly, a review of the research questions was presented. The next chapter presents concluding remarks of the study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6. CONCLUSION

This chapter details the concluding remarks of the dissertation. The purpose of this research study was to identify what enables and inhibits social interaction in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. The literature review directed the study in order to understand the phenomenon. The research approach and the analytical framework for answering the research questions were justified. The gathering of empirical materials and the use of the analytical framework to analyse, interpret, and discuss gathered empirical materials were detailed. The analysis, interpretation, and discussion produced a number of points that assisted in answering the research questions.

The SPIT analysis found that all 11 social presence indicators were present in the analysis of artefacts. This suggested that social presence indicators enabled participants to perceive the presence of other participants in the online cross-disciplinary research conference.

The first objective of the study was to investigate how social interactions are promoted in an online cross-disciplinary research conference. The study identified several promoters of social interaction these include sharing and seeking of information, social presence, time and geographical confidence and flexibility, facilitation, prescribed/relevant topics and increased confidence and reduced evaluation anxiety.

Some inhibitors of social interaction identified in this research study were lack of community, prescribed topics, minimal activities, lack of non-verbal and social cues and clarity of topics. To enable social interaction, organisers of online conferences need to make sure that prescribed topics of discussions are clearly defined and relevant to all participants.

The research study identified that prescribed topics both enabled and inhibited social interaction. While some participants contributed towards these topics, others did not. To ensure interaction, online conference designers should consider allowing participants to define topics/themes within conferences.

The research study found that some participants' unplanned expectations were met, such that they were able to make contacts and collaborate with other researchers. In addition, some participants expected that their papers, which were presented to the online conference initiators, would be included in the 55 concept papers. However, this was not the case for all researchers and therefore their expectations of the online cross-disciplinary

research conference were not met.

The online conference initiators expectation of the online conference suggest that they wanted participants to come up with possible research problems areas within the SSLH community and find possible research collaborations so that funding could be made possible. However, themes and the prescribed topics setting made it difficult for some participants to continue to take part in the online conference.

The online conference organisers' expectation was that researchers would fully participate in the online conference. On the contrary, participation of the conference was described as poor (CET, 2005). The probable explanation is that most researchers could not participate because the online conference took place within term time. Researchers were busy with other academic work and other commitments during the period that the online conference took place. If the online conference took place during a period when researchers were less busy, the participation might have improved. In addition, participants need to be informed of these initiatives well in advance so that they could plan their schedules to enable participation.

The research has identified and confirmed several social interaction enablers and inhibitors. However, some of social interaction enablers were also found to be inhibitors. The use of online conferences to facilitate communication and collaboration has become an important theme in information systems research and practice as well as in other disciplines. This interpretive case study research was a contribution towards understanding online social interaction.

## **6.1 Future Research**

Further research is required using the analytical framework both qualitatively and quantitatively and concentrating on the analysis of online conference artefacts, so to understand and explore thoroughly online social interaction enablers and inhibitors. As a result, this will provides useful guidelines for further improvements on the task designs of online conferences and improves online discussions and participation. Further investigation is also needed to find out if researchers' newly formed collaborations/relationships were sustained after the SBK online conference ended.

## **6.2 Final Word**

Finally, even though the research study focused predominantly on a cross-disciplinary research conference, its findings can have useful application to online social interaction in

general. In some way, these results can be used to inform the online conference designers, administrators, facilitators, and participants to be mindful of, whereby encouraging factors that foster social interaction, and avoiding actions that inhibit social interaction. As this study has shown, online conferences arguably have some merits over face-to-face conferences, but these benefits can only be optimised when social interaction is deliberately fostered through convergence of online conference tool, facilitation, and topic design.

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## APPENDIX A – INFORMAL FORUMS

### Welcome

Ref		Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
WF1	F1	<b>A warm welcome!</b> – ...warm welcome to everyone at the start of Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge. Let's introduce ourselves to each other. Say something about what brought you here, leave a message of support or simply say hi 😊 .	Welcoming participants and giving them instructions on what to do.	Confidence (TG1), Humour (TG3), Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants have to introduce themselves.
WF2	P1	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> ...a warm welcome! ...look forward to taking part in a lively and fruitful debate... My interest is to look at how effective peer-to-peer information and communication can improve knowledge for development, mainly in Africa.	Excitement	Confidence (TG1), Corporatism (DT2), Techno optimism (DT3), Pragmatism (DT4).	Calling other participants to improve knowledge development in Africa.
WF3	F1	<b>Welcome P1!</b> – Hi, P1 Welcome ... and all the best for a very enjoyable and productive conference. ... it takes a technophile to be the first participant to post in an online conference 😊. Please tell us a bit more about yourself in your profile when you are able to update it... (I am sure that many other participants would want to know more about you and your work) I am looking forward to reading your postings in the discussions	Excitement	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3) Technocracy (DT6), Corporatism (DT2)	Call on participants to make sure that they update their profiles.
WF4	P2	<b>Welcome P1!</b> – Thanks for the welcome, F1 as "humanist" and literary person ...a bit strange to meet virtually, but ... looking forward to the discussion. ...interested in how literary reflects and models identity and want to persuade people that literary ... is a vital and important skill. ...teach Afrikaans and Dutch literature and literary theory at X University (W Campus).	Self-introduction and stating areas of research.	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Techno optimism (DT3).	Uncomfortable to interact online but keen to take part.
WF5	F1	<b>Nothing like a story!</b> – P2, Thanks for joining us. I hope that you will find and tell many rich stories in "Shifting Boundaries".... 😊	Acknowledging participant.	Humour (TG3) Confidence (TG1).	More rich stories expected from P2.
WF6	P3	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> – Welcome - I look forward to this initiative	Enthusiastic.	Confidence (TG1).	Will participate in

					discussions.
WF7	P4	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> – Hi to all. I don' want to start off by being negative but if this site doesn't speed up participants would not return.	Notification and seeking assistance	Technocracy (DT6), Uncertainty (TG5).	Cannot access the environment properly.
WF8	F1	<b>Acceleration</b> – Hi P4, ... think we're likely to see a ramping up of activity as participants work through e-mail that arrived from late Friday afternoon. Please note that Monday and Tuesday are allocated to making sure that people can come onto the site, read and post messages and navigate the environment. It's also an opportunity to get a sense of who else is involved. Does the site load very slowly from where you are P4? (I need to check whether you are talking about the pace of interaction or the speed with which the site loads?).	Seeking clarification from participant.	Factual Information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6), Techno optimism (DT3).	Problems - slow loading of pages  participants are accessing the conference at the same time.
WF9	P4	<b>RE: Acceleration</b> – Hi, F1, No the speed with which new screens load i.e. when I click on a thread.	Explanation of problems encountered.	Factual Information (TG2) Technocracy (DT6).	The problem identified has to be sorted.
WF10	F2	<b>Re: Is this site slow &amp; some tips...</b> – Hi to all! I am F2 participating from Botswana. I am one of your conference hosts. Our network is usually very slow ...need a lot of patience in opening up these pages, 😊 But we are getting used to it...In the mornings it's usually better... A tip that helps me a lot is to select the link "read all messages in forum," so you can read all messages at once. Another tip is to open the answer forum page in a new page (by right clicking on the link "reply" and selecting "open page in new window"). This makes it possible to switch between ... reply window and the original message .... ... looking forward to the next weeks!	Self-introducing and stating areas of expertise. List of tips.	Factual information (TG2), Humour (TG2), Technocracy (DT6), Persuasion (TG4), Techno optimism (DT3).	Helpful tips to participants on how read messages in forums.
WF11	F2	<b>Subscribing to forums</b> – Thanks F2 for that very good advice. It's also possible to subscribe to receive all messages from a forum by e-mail. ...messages will then be sent to you by e-mail almost immediately after they are posted and you can reply by e-mail too. If you do subscribe please remember to set up e-mail filters and to guide the mail from this conference to one or many folders (e.g. one per forum to which you are subscribed because each forum has a unique e-mail address.) If you	Instructions for participants.	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Technocracy (DT6), Corporatism(DT2).	Participants do have to log into the conference to see posted messages. By subscribing all messages posted in forums are sent

		don't do this your Inbox may be swamped with messages from Shifting Boundaries 😊.			through email.
WF12	F1	<b>Hi P4 and P3</b> – Welcome to both of you! Thanks for prioritising joining this process at the start of your very busy Mondays.	Acknowledging participant's contribution.	Humour (TG3), Technocracy (DT6), Corporatism (DT2).	Participants keen to interact with one another online.
WF13	F3	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> – Hi Everyone! Indeed, a <i>warm welcome to all</i> . ...expect this to be a critical and lively debate. I am especially keen to explore themes such as "notions of difference" and "knowledge and agency". I hope to engage with, and also draw as much as possible from <i>all of you!</i>	Greeting and stating intentions.	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Techno optimism (DT3), Pragmatism (DT4), Technocracy (DT6).	Will explore two themes of the conference and will get more information from other participants.
WF14	P5	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> – Hi all Good luck for the conference. Viva disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity ...	Praise to the conference initiators.	Confidence (TG1), Technocracy (DT6), Corporatism (DT2).	Congratulating the conference organisers.
WF15	P6	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> – I'm here... brought here by the invitation. ...very little idea what to expect, and in another browser window ...trying to find out whether my thought paper ... has had any bearing on any of the themes identified as linking the various contributions. So far the answer seems to be 'no', ...not quite done looking. ... set of pages is all pretty impressive. It must have taken a while to set up, so I'm not sure why the first I heard of it was the day before it went live. To be completely honest I'd feel a lot more 'welcome' at the start if I heard about the party longer in advance. I'd also have been able to plan to allocate some time to this.	Seeking clarification.  Stating problems	Neutrality (DT1), Technocracy (DT6).	Willing to participate in the online discussions.

WF16	F1	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> – Hi P6, Thanks for getting here despite ... time constraints. ...an announcement about "Shifting Boundaries Online" went out by e-mail on 4th April. Please accept our apologies ... The process extends over a three week period. The Exploring Phase (first two weeks) is suitable for very flexible participation ...the conversations could/should be quite busy during the Consolidating Phase from 22-29 April. ...hope that you will find "Shifting Boundaries Online" to be an interesting and productive process.	Expressing gratitude and apology.  Stating conference programme.	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2), Techno optimism (DT3), Pragmatism (DT4), Technocracy (DT6).	Even though academics and researchers have time constraints, the online conference is a priority.
WF17	P7	<b>Re: A warm welcome!</b> – Hi - I'm ...Prof in the Literacy dept and centre for film and media studies at X - I teach mainly film and literary and cultural theory -...currently working on SA higher education policy (academic freedom, institutional culture) Marx critical thinking - ... central focus is the ways in which the NRF appears to misunderstand and marginalise the social value of humanist studies.	self-introduction.  Stating areas of expertise.	Factual information (TG2).	Will participate in the online discussions, reservations about the NRF areas of research interest
WF18	F1	<b>Social value of humanist studies</b> – Hi P7, thanks for this message and welcome to "Shifting Boundaries." Are there particular themes that provide opportunities for you to address concerns about NRF recognition of the social value of humanist studies?	express gratitude participant for posting a messages	Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	Conference themes PAR7 will be contributing.
WF19	P7	<b>Re: Social value of humanist studies</b> – It is no secret that the main planks of the NRF's research policy are Science and Technology, alongside a number of selected themes and focuses from or within the social sciences/humanities. ...the majority of people working in the humanities, is the marginalization or invisibility of the ways in which the work we do in and across various specific disciplines contributes to the economy and social good of South Africa. ...emphasis of a virtual conference like this - enabled by new technology - itself can only piggyback on these advanced literacy skills which everyone shares, with of course the different emphases and vocabularies provided by different disciplines. But it's as if we take all this very special training so much for granted that we are unable to make a public case for its real social value and utility. ... seems broadly accepted that primary literacy is or	Stating areas of agreement and disagreement.	Factual information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6), Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT6).	Shift the focus of research to the humanist knowledge than scientific knowledge.

		<p>should be a major goal of our education system because of its real social value, it puzzles me that the skills of advanced literacy have not been accepted or fore grounded as such in our ways of talking about and supporting teaching and research in the humanities. To give just one but I think obvious and pertinent example - while scientific knowledge clearly has a great deal to offer in fighting the AIDS pandemic, and hopefully the medical solution to AIDS may or will be found through the promotion of scientific research, it is humanistic knowledge - the cultural understanding of people's actual ways of thinking about and confronting or avoiding the pandemic - that is absolutely necessary for fighting the disease. Note that ...not saying that the NRF should only fund projects in the humanities that directly contribute to the cultural war on AIDS, but rather recognize ... unplannable ways training in humanist studies might well prepare people to leave the university and work in the AIDS field, as in so many other fields....</p>			
WF19	P7	<p>As I write this, I must also say I feel a little discomfort with the virtual form of presentation ...seems to somehow make invisible the reality of intellectual production - email is so quick and immediate, it doesn't really seem to be the form for considered thinking - ...implies preparation, drafting and redrafting and the stimulus of other actual presences, the responsiveness embodied in the dynamics of visual interaction and the gaze, the possibility of altering and adjusting, refining and deepening the articulation of ideas and so on.</p> <p>...the form seems itself something of a denial of the central research tool/formative discipline of and in the humanities: the <i>arrest and articulation</i> of thought in writing - perhaps the primal technology of the intellect besides which the pleasures or fantasies of the 'immediacy' offered by <i>virtual communication seem a little thin!</i> ...: a message ....can't possibly have the density or richness of the considered thinking that goes into real writing, <i>what use does it have?</i> ...sense a strange parallel between the ways in which this <i>virtual conference</i> takes for <i>granted/makes invisible the labour of written</i> and considered thinking</p>	Stating areas of disagreement.	Factual information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Techno optimism (DT3), Pragmatism (DT4), Technocracy (DT6).	Online communication messages lose richness. The NRF has to include literacy in its research agenda.

		and the taking for granted/making invisible of the NRF's attitude towards the varied skills of advanced or critical literacy which are at the core of humanist training. ...I'd <i>prefer a real conference event</i> , where maybe I'd be <i>forced</i> to make a little more sense that this!...			
WF20	F1	<b>Critical Literacies</b> – P7, thanks for composing and posting this message despite your "discomfort with the virtual form of presentation. ...you have made a most eloquent case for the crucial role of humanities education in teaching advanced literacies including critical literacies. Does anyone else want to share their perspectives on this issue?	Acknowledging participant's contribution.	Neutrality (DT1), Corporatism (DT2), Technocracy (DT6).	Calling other participants to add their comments to P9 message.
WF21	F1	<b>The virtual form of presentation</b> – P7, thanks for the questions that you raise about the suitability of the online medium for informed, reflective discourse in general. ...will frame a reply that is both respectful of your perspective and suggests a slightly more optimistic set of possibilities. You may ask what I am waiting for? ...Well, as it happens your reservations about the rapid off the cuff response may be more widely held than you imagine 😊.	Acknowledging participant's contribution.	Technocracy (DT6), Corporatism (DT2), Humour (TG3), Neutrality (DT1).	Interacting in an online medium for informed and reflective discussions is a popular concern.
WF22	F1	<b>Style of communication</b> – P7, Thank you for sharing your reservations about whether online communication is suitable for "considered thinking - which of course implies preparation, drafting and redrafting and the stimulus of other actual presences, the responsiveness embodied in the dynamics of visual interaction and the gaze, the possibility of altering and adjusting, refining and deepening the articulation of ideas and so on." ...issues ... raising have as much to do with the underlying <i>consultation process</i> as the fact that it is happening in an <i>online environment</i> . Engaging across disciplines in a conversation where no discipline holds primacy, entails stepping into a zone of risk even if we bring <i>our</i> disciplinary lenses, and discourses with us. ...participant can contribute <i>some elements</i> of the larger answers but <i>we</i> can only reach a larger view by sharing these. ...this calls for a style of communication (as seen in your message) ... more tentative and provisional than a conference	Communication in an online conference is different from face-to-face conference and uses a different style of communication.	Factual information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4), Technocracy (DT6).	Online consultation process is possible despite contributing of messages is a tedious task.

		paper yet is still far removed from the off the cuff comments of a talk show or an immediate reply to an e-mail. Does anyone else have any thoughts about this issue?			
WF23	P8	<b>Greetings from Durban</b> – Hi Everyone, good to make it on board on this busy day, wish all conferences were this flexible, more later ...).	Exciting to take part in discussions	Confidence (TG1).	Conference is flexible to attend.
WF24	F1	😊 <b>Re: Greetings from Durban</b> – Hi P8, good to meet you here. ...glad that the flexibility is useful to you. In designing this process we assumed that the ability to join a discussion at anytime from anywhere would encourage participation by busy researchers. What's your area of research specialisation?	Welcoming and acknowledging P8's contribution. Seeking more information from P8's.	Confidence (TG1), Humour (TG3), Factual information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6), Techno optimism (DT3).	The flexibility of the conference. More introductory information needed.
WF25	P9	<b>Hi and Greetings</b> – Hi and Greetings to some old friends and new virtual acquaintances! It's good to see the possibilities of virtual conferencing being put to good use. Well done NRF!	Excitement. Acknowledging the online conference initiators.	Confidence (TG1), Technocracy (DT6), Techno optimism (DT3).	online conference has made it possible to interact with old friends.
WF26	F2	<b>Re: Hi and Greetings</b> – Hi P9, Welcome to the forum! From where are you participating?	Reinforcing more introduction from P9.	Neutrality (DT1).	More introductory information needed..
WF27	P9	<b>Re: Hi and Greetings</b> – Hello F2, ... <i>joining</i> the conference from Y University. ... director of the Institute for the Literacy Dept. As well as ' <i>blue skies</i> ' research, we do plenty of practical intervention work in language education and policy, literary research, institution building, journal publication etc. ... going to look up your <i>profile!!</i> , Cheers.	Self-introduction Stating areas of expertise and credentials.	Confidence (TG1), Factual information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6), Humour (TG3).	Will participate in the online discussions.
WF28	F2	<b>Re: Hi and Greetings</b> – Hi P9, Your research sound very interesting. I must admit I am not an expert in your field. I work in <i>the eLearning support team at the University of U</i> , so my research area is more targeted towards how best to introduce eLearning at Universities, how best to support academics and students - but I am looking forward to learn some more.	Stating areas of research.	Factual information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6).	F1 will use the online conference to learn from other participants' area of research expertise.

WF29	F3	<b>Re: Hi and Greetings</b> – Hi F2. Nice to ' <i>hear</i> ' from you. How it U? Will keep in touch!	Welcoming	Confidence (TG1).	Excitement a colleague has logged in.
WF30	F2	<b>Re: Hi and Greetings</b> F3, U is fine, finally getting a bit cooler 😊 a <i>quite hectic</i> semester is <i>nearly over</i> and .... Looking forward to the <i>long vacation</i> ...and how are you?	Greeting a colleague, Notification of weather conditions.	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3).	Going for a break soon and the weather is changing.
WF31	P10	<b>Good morning</b> – Good morning from a cold but relatively sunny Sheffield in England. I am afraid (F1) that loading pages is extremely slow; much slower than we are used to on University networks here. Nevertheless, I am impressed by the technology. Just a note about myself. I was a biochemist and am now joint director of an Institute of A and C within our school of Law and have spent some time in the last two years visiting the Law Faculty at P.	Self-introduction,  Informing others of weather conditions.  Seeking assistance.	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6).	Access problems needs to be attended.
WF32	F1	<b>Hi P10</b> – ... <i>warm</i> welcome from a Cape Town <i>autumn day</i> which should reach 25C 😊 Thanks for persisting with the slow page loads. (Often our experience in SA is exactly the reverse as we wait for pages to load from European or US based servers).	Welcome.  Notification of the weather condition.	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Technocracy (DT6).	Accessing of European or US based servers is slow (normal).
WF33	P11	<b>Hello, and sorry to be late arriving</b> – Hi everyone, <i>sorry to be late in arriving</i> . Some <i>login hassles</i> which have finally, provisionally, been sorted out. I'm sure that we will be <i>chatting in detail</i> : briefly, my background is in the discipline of archaeology, although I tend to be multi- and interdisciplinary type work these days from a base in the Centre for Management at Y.	Self-introduction and apology.	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6).	Loading of pages much slower, participants will be logging into the conference late if the problem persists.
WF34	F1	<b>Welcome P11</b> – Hi P11, ...impressed by your <i>determination</i> to get here. (Its also great to see you here because of your teaching projects a few years back with very early versions of the <i>connect environment</i> that we are using for this conference).,I hope that you have an <i>engaging</i> and	Acknowledging Participant's efforts to contribute to	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2),	Encourage participant to take part in discussions

		<i>worthwhile</i> conference.	discussions.	Technocracy (DT6).	
WF35	P12	<b>Hello from friendly city</b> – Hi all ... <i>currently Interim Director of Y at the S</i> (result of merger of O,P, and Q) ...previous background is in the field of Public Administration. ...constantly <i>struck by the</i> value of a sound foundation in terms of a social sciences and humanities education - people who can think <i>critically and creatively!</i> Hope to be benefiting from <i>engaging with some bright minds...</i> Regards	Self-introduction,  Stating areas of expertise.	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3).	Attending the conference will benefit the individual interacting with bright minds.
WF36	F1	😊 <b>Re: Hello from friendly city</b> – Hi P12, Welcome, and thanks for getting here: Rest assured there are a lot of <i>very bright minds</i> in this consultation process😊. I look forward to reading your postings in the forums	Acknowledging P12 contribution.	Confidence (TG1), Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Techno optimism (DT3).	Conference participants are a selection of academics and researchers very bright minds.

## Café

### Appendix A (continues)

Ref		Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
CF1	F1	<b>From Where we are</b> – A warm welcome to "Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge". Let's introduce ourselves to each other. Please describe the view outside your window and say anything else that you want to share about yourself.	Welcome and reinforce contribution.	Confidence (TG1), Legitimacy (DT5)	description of outside environment.
CF2	P24	<b>Re: From Where we are</b> – The view at a <i>sunny</i> but <i>chilly</i> Cape Town –	Attachment pictures of UCT.	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2).	Showing other participants the view of UCT.
CF3	P5	<b>Re: From Where we are</b> – ...may be obtuse, or luddite, or both, but is anything happening here? Is there something we are waiting for? Or do I just not know where to look?	Seeking to reach understanding.	Humour (TG3), Uncertainty (TG5).	Seeking clarity from the conference organisers

CF4	F1	<p><b>Re: From Where we are</b> – Hi P5, You're neither obtuse or luddite. Thanks for asking a fundamental question about the online consultation process which I suspect is also puzzling several other participants. As you say there are no concept papers available for access on this site. What we do have are the short summary statements concerning each theme that feed into the forums. These statements result from an analysis of the thought papers. ...quote the information about the Delphi technique on the public website "The Delphi technique is iterative in nature and generally uses successive rounds where experts are asked to supply responses to a list of questions that relate to issues or themes. It is designed 'to bring a disparate group of informed opinion holders to consensus about the future, if only on ranges of possibilities' (Lempert, et al, 2003:17)." ...Delphi technique allows for a focus on questions within overarching categories/themes but defers an explicit analysis by the organisational stakeholders to the end of the process. The concept papers have been used to identify themes and questions. The themes can be seen as hooks and containers for cross-disciplinary consultation. ...concept papers are important products of the total process they are not the focus of this phase of consultation. <i>The life of these online interactions is in cross-disciplinary engagement by a group of expert researchers</i> with key questions which arise from the concept papers. I hope that this is helpful.</p>	<p>Assurance</p> <p>Defines the Delphi technique.</p> <p>Giving more information that is useful to participants.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6), Techno optimism (DT3).</p>	<p>The conference discussion is not about concept papers but cross-disciplinary engagement by a group of expert researchers.</p>
CF5	P6	<p><b>Re: From Where we are</b> – Hey all, I'm <i>confused</i> too. I really <i>can't say I know what (most of) the themes</i> mean. And I'm if anything <i>less clear</i> what they are supposed to be for. I'm a <i>professional epistemologist and philosopher of science</i>, as well as a theoretical and empirical researcher, and ...<i>don't know</i> what "knowledge" or "boundary" are supposed to mean here. ...very little way of making sense of the notion of "shifting"; Even if I did know those, <i>I'm not</i> sure what the options are for these themes once we're done with them? Are these to be the replacement "Focus Areas?"</p>	<p>Seeking clarity from other participants.</p>	<p>Uncertainty (TG5), Factual Information (TG2).</p>	<p>The meaning of the online conference themes not clear.</p>
CF6	F1	<p><b>Learning across disciplines</b> – What have you learnt from another discipline that is valuable to your research? What have you taught</p>	<p>Drawing in participants,</p>	<p>Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2)</p>	<p>Have any of the participants been</p>

		someone in another discipline that is of value to their research? Your answers to one or both could be interesting to share 😊	prompting discussions.		involved in a cross-disciplinary research.
CF7	P20	<p><b>disciplines</b> – I thought I'd share something of what has happened in The faculty of Arts, For ... they have decided to appoint into the faculty a so called "Research professor" (in the manner of name changes this has become a "research Fellow" even though I warned them about the Gender problems! Any suggestions on a "better" term would be greatly appreciated!) In the Arts Faculty, that is I/me.</p> <p>The faculty has some 14 different departments, ranging from jewellery to Vocal Art/Opera. In essence my role has become threefold (besides attempting to do my own research) Capacity building, Research brokering. This has been the fascinating one, because what I am to do is to put the right people with the right people (skills, expertise, knowledge, drive, etc) and with them try to develop research projects and effective research methods and systems. The first thing that happened was the realisation of shared pedagogies -- design is design, for example, whether you are working on interiors, jewellery in platinum, or haute couture. (spelling?) fashion. Markets are markets, whether you are working on crafts or animation. And so on. ...beginning to develop shared vocabularies, shared methods and shared expertise. ...also beginning to put together researchers and "practitioners" into teams. We have a long way to go, and time and money constraints are huge, and ...the huge hurdle of "artists doing research??! NaaaH!"</p> <p>The third Area has been in Research outputs. ...<i>research needs to be printed</i> (for some reason perhaps only the natural scientists would know about -- perhaps SSLH would reconsider this as well) and the acknowledgement of artistic outputs being in some form equivalent to research outputs is an argument that is making heavy weather (not least of all because of the lack of agreement within the arts community -- I'm beginning to think that, as they say when two lawyers agree then one hasn't thought enough, but when two artists agree then one hasn't "felt"</p>	Narrating experiences and problems facing P20's faculty.	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	Researchers and practitioners in the 14 departments of the Arts Faculty are working together. SSLH needs to be aware of these research output concerns.

		<p>enough -- I rest my case!) There are strong arguments to be made for the equivalencies and perhaps SSLH is the place to do this. The second area has been in the publication possibilities -- consider, in shorthand the difference between Art research in the service of the discipline, and Art research where art is in the service of society (and I speak not of humanity and the human spirit). In the first case outlets in the form of journals are limited to art clumped together as History, Literature and Criticism (for example) and so research that works on the materials of the art is difficult to place in journals (another boundary), and the latter is a problem because to a large extent one is bound to the discipline and methods required of the Social Sciences -- consider for example the work on using the theatrical for HIV/AIDS intervention. Another example, as a teaser. If you are testing high end jewellery design using newly developed alloys, where do you publish? Metallurgy might not buy the artistic, and design might not buy the "hard science." Anyway, these are some of our experiences. It is a hugely challenging (and fulfilling) environment.</p>			
CF8	P5	<p><b>Re: Learning across disciplines</b> – Fascinating. We have exactly the same problem/issue at C. Has anyone attempted to construct a 'unit' of innovation (comparable to a 'publication unit') for the creative and performing arts? If so, details please.</p>	<p>Seeking a solution from others participants.</p>	<p>Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).</p>	<p>Academics do face similar problems within institutions.</p>

**My Conference**  
**Appendix A (continues)**

Ref		Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
MC1	F1	<p><b>My conference</b> – This is the space for discussing our experiences of Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge including our highlights, surprises, learning, and frustrations.</p>	<p>Setting the environment for discussions.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2).</p>	<p>Highlights, surprises, learning, and frustrations.</p>
MC2	P9	<p><b>My conference</b> Hum, well - I hope we are not going to experience this conference as one of those events where everyone <i>sneaks in at the last</i></p>	<p>Participation is low and</p>	<p>Humour (TG3), Factual Information</p>	<p>The online conference</p>

		<p><i>moment to slurp up the results of earlier discussion or, worse, to trounce current state of debate. Thoughts which arise are:</i></p> <p>1. Is everyone too busy to participate? Life on South African campuses is hectic at present for very well-canvassed reasons: transformation, mergers, laughable staff-student ratios on some campuses, the desire to actually do research rather than talk about it - - -. 2. Are the discussion themes too generalised to make much impact? 3. Can a range of people in vastly different disciplines make intellectual progress outside a lower-order community of practice? 4. Is it possible to <i>herd cats</i>?</p>	suggestions of possible reasons.	(TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4), Uncertainty (TG 5).	participation is low even though it is flexible to attend.
MC3	P21	<p><b>Re: My conference</b> – Oh my word! DIT was <i>offline</i> for one day last week, and I was away and my schedule is horrendous – so yes, P9, I am only joining in now "<i>to slurp up the results</i>" ...but no chance of my trying to trounce previous discussion as much of it was within a discourse that I found fairly alienating. Hopefully I'll make up for my late entry with a fresh perspective! And yes, <i>cats can readily be herded</i> if you have sufficient <i>supplies of fresh anchovies</i>.</p>	Apology and proposed intentions.	Humour (TG3), Technocracy (DT6), Factual Information (TG2)	Busy schedule restricted participant from contributing to the online conference earlier.
MC4	F1	<p><b>Re: My conference</b> – Hi P21, you're most welcome to join us. I am <i>looking forward to hearing some of your fresh perspectives in the other forums</i> too. (Apologies for the constrained anchovy rations 🐟)</p>	Welcoming and reinforcing participant contributions.	Humour (TG3), Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5).	Call for participants' fresh perspectives contributions in the other forums.
MC5	P19	<p><b>Re: My conference</b> – I am writing this as most of you have already arrived home at the end of another long day. ...have been participating in this conference on behalf of the Department of Safety and Security Management University of X and due to the technical miracle of modern communications. ...sitting in my office in the middle of a cool but somewhat blue-sky afternoon in X, USA. Only an hour ago there were actually a few snowflakes falling. <i>But this is not what the conference was about.</i></p> <p>...first want to say that I am so pleased to have had the opportunity to represent the Department of Safety and Security Management. Through <i>this opportunity I have been able to read and consider so many different</i></p>	<p>Self-introduction and areas of expertise.</p> <p>Weather description of where participant is participating.</p>	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Pragmatism (DT4), Techno optimism (DT3)	The flexibility of the conference allows participant who are geographically dispersed and different time zones to attend.

	<p><i>issues related to our common endeavour of research.</i> This is regardless of the paradigms, our methodologies or our perspectives on the fundamental nature of the world(s) we live in every day. ...observed in this process is is the deep commitment that we all share regarding the <i>human condition</i> and ...honored that the NRF has allowed me to partake in the important discussions that have taken place.</p> <p>I have, in a couple of my contributions, pointed to challenges of <i>multi/inter/trans-disciplinary research</i>. But for myself I also found a forum in which there was a sustained dialogue on many of these issues and that provides me with a real sense that, for at least those of us who participated, <i>we can bridge some of these issues</i> and, as suggested by the conference title, shift at least some of the boundaries of knowledge. ...have no direct working relationship with NRF funded programs ... currently involved in two somewhat small research projects in South Africa. One ...comparing the relationship of attitudes toward general democratic principles with specific attitudes toward human rights protections among South African university policing students and American university criminal justice students (I actually have no pre-conceived notions of what the differences and similarities might look like). The second project involves a one-year study of the influence of training and work experience among South African police recruits on their acceptance of principles of democratic policing, specifically community policing. So if anyone has any insights to offer me I would be pleased to hear from you.</p> <p>Important to these studies are the potential influences of a broad array of social and individual human experiences. Although the scope of these projects is limited almost any field represented by each of you participating in this conference would have something important to say. That is a much bigger project, but I think in principle involves the types of questions raised in much of the discussion. Not to sound preachy, but thinking in terms of disciplinarity ...see my little projects as a small example of the fact that human experience is <i>multi-dimensional, not</i></p>	<p>Acknowledging the conference initiators.</p> <p>Current projects undertaking.</p> <p>Story telling –</p>		<p>Calling other participants for information concerning the area of research participant is currently involved.</p> <p>Use a parable to make a point - when working together provide a more complete description</p>
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		<p><i>multi-disciplinary.</i></p> <p>I don't know if you have this story (parable) in South Africa, but <i>it is one of the three blind men and an elephant</i>. Each man used his sense of touch to describe the elephant from a different vantage point. As you probably have already surmised each had a different representation. None was wrong from his vantage but none alone could give an accurate description of the elephant. Only when all the descriptions were combined was there a more complete picture. But even then there were other potential vantage points. Maybe what was needed was other blind men (read disciplines, paradigms, etc.) when working together would provide a more complete description.</p> <p>So, what did I get from this conference? One, a validation that even though I have been wandering in a desert I am not as alone I once thought I was. Two, a bit of a map for navigating that desert, And three, the opportunity to share time with other wanderers. Thank you!</p>	three blind men and an elephant.		
MC6	F1	<p><b>Re: My conference</b> – P19 thanks for your steadfast and thoughtful <i>participation across the oceans and several time zones</i> away. I have a sense that you have already walked around a few elephants in your multi-dimensional research 😊 and this really shows in your messages.</p>	Acknowledging P19's commitment to contribute.	Humour (TG3), Technocracy (DT6), Techno optimism (DT3).	P19 has undertaken multi-dimensional research
MC7	P9	<p><b>Re: My conference</b> – ...thanks for the anchovette inducements. ...have enjoyed this electronic get-together for its novelty and for the quality of the support the shifting boundaries team has supplied. ...less convinced about the academic merits of the 'outcomes' (sies!). ...there was a massive disjuncture between the 'thought papers' submitted, and the way in which the online conference was framed. ...only evidence for this is that the papers that were aired at Rhodes (and they were very various) were hardly to be recognised in the conference as it materialised. I am only guessing that this may well have been the case with many of the other institutions represented. My next guess is that the core of the problem (assuming we admit that there has been one) lies with the notion of the SSHL research community as much more than an administrative convenience. To validate such a notion intellectually seems to call for</p>	Has benefited attended the conference even though their concept papers not included in the conference.	Confidence (TG1), Technocracy (DT6), Corporatism (DT2), Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4).	Support the ideas of inter-disciplinary. Participant keen to participate in any consultation process of real intellectual and academics with a better focus.

		such abstract and evanescent discourse that not much progress can be made. The <i>real work takes place in the disciplines</i> , to my way of thinking, and <i>cross-disciplinary research relies on exploiting disciplinary bases</i> with the help of colleagues who can correct and modify one's faltering steps in uncertain territory. Would I want to participate again? Of course, but perhaps in discussion of real intellectual and academic issues with a better focus. Sorry to be frank, but that's the way I feel.			There is more discourse amongst academics than the needed actions.
MC8	F1	<b>Re: My conference</b> – Hi P9, thanks for persisting in these conversations despite your misgivings. Your <i>frank reflections on both content and process</i> have enhanced the quality of the conversation 😊	Acknowledging P9's contributions.	Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2).	P9's contributions improved conversations.
MC9	F1	<b>Away from the screen ;)</b> – Thanks to everyone who was part of Shifting Boundaries Online - even if you only read a few messages. If you posted thanks for some stimulating conversation about SSLH research. From my perspective as a facilitator, this <i>online consultation process</i> raised challenging questions around structural constraints to participation and both contrasting and overlapping notions of research communities. ( <i>I suspect that the technology was not one of our major constraints but perhaps the results of the evaluation survey will give us some clues...</i> ) ...off to Montegau in the Eastern Cape till Tuesday and I hope that your Workers Day weekends are relaxing and enjoyable.	Acknowledging participants' contributions.  Closing statement.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Technocracy (DT6), Techno optimism (DT3), Legitimacy (DT5), Pragmatism (DT4), Confidence (TG1).	Thanking all Participants for attending or logging in to the conference website. Participants attended the conference despite constraints.

## Help

### Appendix A (continues)

Ref		Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
HP1	F1	💡 <b>How do I...?</b> – Hi all Please feel free to post requests for help with using the online environment or conference process here. This forum will be monitored by H who is in charge of our helpdesk and by conference hosts. Thanks.	Stating purpose of forum	Factual Information (TG2).	The conference host has a helpdesk facility.
HP2	P20	📖 <b>Re: How do I...?</b> – HI, Please help with an old fool who is struggling with the environment. I wish to reply to a number of the	Seeking assistance.	Uncertainty(DT5), Humour (TG3).	Help for an 'old fool'.

		contributions, but I don't know how to keep the contribution to which I wish to reply on the screen while a prepare the reply?! (Does that make sense?) My memory is fading (what was a writing about?. . .!) so it would be useful to have my reply and the contribution together. Thanks in advance.			
HP3	F1	<p> <b>Seeing the message while composing a reply</b> – Hi P20, This is a most relevant question and not just for senior academics. There are at least three sensible solutions.</p> <p>1) Click on the reply link with the right mouse button and open the reply box in another window (then you can keep switching between the windows)</p> <p>2) Even easier is to use the "Quote reply" button to insert the whole text of the original message in the reply box. You can then easily see the original message by scrolling up and down the screen. In this case you will need to delete everything that you don't wish to quote in your message before clicking on "Submit"</p> <p>3) If you subscribe to receive all messages from a forum by e-mail the text of the original message is there when you click on "Reply". (<i>Please only leave the parts that you wish to quote in the message that you send by e-mail</i>).</p>	Stating solutions to participant's problems.	Factual Information (TG2), Legitimacy (DT5).	Three possible solutions given to help participant reply to messages.
HP4	P20	<p> <b>Re: How do I...?</b> – Thanks F1, By the way, if "senior" refers to me, you got it wrong on both accounts -- I am a spritely youngster just topping the half-century, and in the grand field of academia I am green (in Afrikaans -- 'n groentjie!). Just got a big mouth! But thanks for the info.</p>	Stating specifics.	Humour (TG3), Factual Information (TG2).	Academic still fresh reference of (I am green).

## APPENDIX A – FORMAL FORUMS

### Paradigms

Ref		Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
PF1	F1	<p><b>Opening Message</b> – Welcome to this discussion on the theme: "Paradigms".</p> <p>Here is a brief statement from the synthesis of the thought papers by online conference initiators:</p> <p>"We suggest that the notion of "Paradigms" has been explored in the submitted thought papers and that it constitutes a theme for SSLH research in South Africa.</p> <p>Examples through which Paradigms have been considered include: <i>Humanities and Science, identity and power, modernity/postmodernity, ideology, theory and practice, public/private, human rights, social justice, equity, democracy, morality, ethics, values, ethnicity, nation building, diversity/difference/sameness, globalisation, race, methods of research.</i>"</p> <p>Lets start by considering three questions about Paradigms:</p> <p>What are the issues that are core to this theme?</p> <p>In what ways could this theme provide transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?</p> <p>In what ways could this theme serve to inspire and support SSLH in SA?</p> <p>There is a thread of conversation for each of these questions</p>	Opening message for the discussion forum and topics to be discussed.	Factual Information (TG2). Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5)	New topics on aspects of the SBK are discussed
PF2	F1	<p><b>Core Issues?</b> – What are the issues that are core to the theme of Paradigms?</p>	Topic that needs to be discussed	Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5)	Participants to post their contributions
PF3	F1	<p><b>Transformative?</b> – In what ways could the "Paradigms" theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? Why?/Why not?</p>	Suggested issues concerning transformative ideas of paradigms.	Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5)	Participants contribute to transformative ideas of paradigms.



		<p>Maybe a "boundary of knowledge" is just the gap between what we know and what we don't know. Then, again, we shift by doing scientific work, and its the work that does the shifting, not the themes. Maybe all the "theme" <i>talk is just a dressed up, somewhat confusing and intimidating way of saying</i> something about setting priorities for what we should be trying to find out about. Then "transformative ideas" would be ones that changed our priorities? Could it really be that simple? I doubt it - there is supposed to be something special or distinctive that social and human sciences have that natural ones don't, and that couldn't be something as simple as a collective (or policy level) set of priorities for what to try to understand.</p> <p>So: What are "themes" such that they can make anything at all happen? What is a "boundary of knowledge"? What does it mean to "shift" one? Is there some simpler way of saying all this? I'm very curious... Cheers,</p>			
PF5	F1	<p><b>Understandings?</b> – How <i>do other people here understand</i> the question: "In <i>what ways could</i> this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?"</p>	Introducing a new topic for discussions and prompting discussions.	Legitimacy (DT5), Corporatism (DT2).	Invitation to other participants for their contribution
PF6	F1	<p><b>Incomprehensible?</b> – Hi P6, thanks for this challenging group of questions! Is anyone else sitting with similar questions?</p>	Acknowledging participant's contribution. Prompting a new topic for discussion	Corporatism (DT2).	P9 contribution to the topic.
PF7	P9	<p><b>Re: Transformative?</b> – <i>Thanks P6. I think I understand the gist of what is being asked</i>, though as someone who tries to work in the humanities, I find the lingo a little abstract. Leading or prompting a so-called paradigm shift has become a major objective of academic enterprise (and the overtones in 'enterprise' are deliberate here). <i>I'll leave you to tell me whether science actually progresses by means of paradigm shifts in quite the way Kuhn says it does.</i> But in a looser, perhaps analogous</p>	Identifying areas of agreements and seeking to reach understanding.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5).	Calling academic not to encourage rubbish research and the departments seem not to take note of this.

	<p>way, academics do make their names very often by breaking away from established practices and striking out in a new direction, one which is in some way categorially different.</p> <p>This can be valuable or meretricious depending entirely on the validity of what is being attempted. The judge of the new development, whatever it might be, is the academic community. This is where the problems arise. If I look at the humanities and social sciences over the past twenty years or so, there is a great deal of wonderful new development. There is also a lot of total codswallop being promulgated. Stuff that any trained philosopher or academic should blench at. <i>We don't seem to have the internal disciplines to curb nonsense.</i></p> <p>If we ask why this is so, and whether we are worse-off or better-off than previous academic generations, we come up against the double-sidedness of the notion of a paradigm. On the one hand, working within an accepted paradigm may be merely an instance of what the economist Joseph Schumpeter called 'the herd-like movement of' (fill in the blank - scientists, economists, entrepreneurs, academics generally). In other words, there is a great temptation to conduct our academic careers as if we are '<i>painting by numbers</i>': filling out the paradigm, conducting 'normal science'.</p> <p>On the other hand, the pressure to be always radically 'new' (i.e. to be re-shaping paradigms) can lead to bandwaggoning up blind allies. In the humanities, the paradigm employed is often something to be understood rather than promoted. Often the value of older work is still there, once one makes allowances for an out-of-date approach.</p> <p>So we have a four-sided contest between paradigms that may be valid (with a sound or flawed performance) and invalid (with a sound or flawed performance), compounding the ordinary contest between outstanding work and mediocre work. And the available range of paradigms has proliferated.</p> <p>If making a name is what an academic career is about, people quite often do so by accomplishing excellent work in a flawed paradigm.</p>	<p>Wonderful new development in academic community but most of them are rubbish.</p> <p>Norm among the academic community to conduct quantitative research.</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of knowledge.</p>		<p>A call to shift to non-natural science way of conducting research.</p> <p>Care needs to be taken when shifting these paradigms</p>
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		Clearly an 'open' approach to newness, combined with rigorous critical alertness, is the way to go. But we are up against facile careerism, pressures for 'quantitative' research productivity, an uneven research environment, and poor quality assurance in some publication arenas. All this makes the undoubted 'first prize' of shifting our understanding of phenomena in a meaningful and undeniable fashion quite a challenge. Perhaps the answer lies in less research and more thinking!			
PF8	P13	<p><b>Re: Transformative?</b> – Re: P9, <i>I have to say that much of what is said in P9's contribution rings true.</i> The point I am most interested in, is the one relating to the "lets be clever and create a new paradigm". Within urban studies, urban geography and urban sociology, the "cultural" turn, along with a host of post-???? ...have been intellectually interesting but sometimes not of much value. In my discipline there is an absolute obsession with "lets theorise" and it has not always been particularly productive. I think for example of people who have been elevated to semi gods, because of their extraordinary contribution to theory, yet cannot do a simple consultation on urban processes in the "real world" (yuck - I hate that expression, nevertheless it is important). So I think we need to take care in running in the "new paradigm" direction. Rather, I think that there is ample theory around to keep us going for some time, particularly if we can integrate some of the ideas already out there.</p> <p>I am an active researcher on the applied side of things and cannot make much of a contribution in terms of "high theory". Although <i>I did a PhD on social justice theorisation at L</i>, I still feel unable to participate at that level. However, I think we need to think of the practical implications of what we are doing. I would far rather see the us do the "empirical" stuff using various methods, using the different paradigms we have, and see where that takes us. I think there is too much emphasis on developing new theory, for the sake of it, not because we need new theory or paradigms, and particularly, not because we have really used the existing theory to the full. Less arm-chair philosophy, and more dirty hands tainted with the dust/sweat and frustrations of fieldwork, in my</p>	Identifying areas of agreement with P9's contribution.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT6).	<p>Obsession of using theories in their research.</p> <p>A call for more practical research based than using theories which are not particularly productive. 'arm-chair' philosophy.</p>

		view, is where the new paradigm(s) is to be found.			
PF9	P6	<p><b>Re: Transformative?</b> – I should add - I also agree with P13 here, which is to say that a bout of "armchair philosophy" does not seem to be what is indicated. (When the philosophers *themselves* are saying that cut down on the philosophy, that should count for something.)</p> <p>Boundaries get shifted when we do our scientific work properly, and find out we had them in the wrong place. Any shifts that run ahead of the scientific work are apt to be ideologically motivated (in the pejorative sense), and strictly scientifically irresponsible. We certainly need priorities, but that is another matter.</p>	Identifying areas of agreement with P13's contribution.	Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).	Calling to SSLH community to shift from "armchair philosophy".
PF10	P9	<p><b>Re: Transformative?</b> – I think I agree with both P13 and P6. The substantial differences in rationale, approach and methodology among the disparate disciplines grouped under the humanities and social sciences (even giving inter-and cross-disciplinary work its full value) make it virtually impossible to make a overall judgment as to 'boundary shifts' and 'paradigm shifts' that is meaningful.</p> <p>And I think it is also very true, as P6 points out, that there is a formidable array of rhetorical uses to which the ' new paradigm' notion can be put , from sexy book blurbs, to intra-departmental turf wars and motivations for new journal titles. <i>'My gang is always in the forefront' is a working maxim with some, regardless of divergent consensuses being evident.</i></p> <p>For instance, in literary studies it might be possible to argue for a succesion of paradigms from the nineteenth centruy to the present day that would run as follows: impressionistic literary history, practical criticism/new criticism, structuralism, post structuralism/postmodernism, cultural materialism, new historicism, post-theory etc. But the fact is that such a diachronic trail masks almost everything about the complexity of sub-movements within and alongside these developments, not to mention omitting a ground bass of historical scholarship and textual criticism that is influenced by but semi-independent of the whole story.</p>	Identify areas of agreement with P13's and P6's contributions.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).	<p>Time and effort is spent on unproductive research projects.</p> <p>Rule-of-thumb hindering the research community</p>

		This situation presents few difficulties for the researcher - he or she will use whatever is available that makes sense in solving the problems being addressed. But it may well present difficulties for research administration where a rule-of-thumb sense of what is 'cutting-edge' internationally solves a lot of resource allocation problems.			(literacy studies).
PF11	P6	<p><b>Re: Transformative?</b> – I think you're right - there's a lot of pressure to "look busy", and to show evidence of being "excellent", "innovative", etc. It often seems like it is just not good enough to do consistently "good" or "very good" work, that is regarded as good by the relevant community of experts, and contributes to worthwhile non-academic priorities. The thing is, it is not scientists who demand this innovation for its own sake, it is usually managers/leaders and other 'politicians' (broadly understood), or individuals who view their careers more 'politically' and are on the make. I didn't think that this exercise was *supposed* to be a version of that, though. I'm still not sure what it is supposed to be, and the fact that others share my perplexity at the way it has been set up makes me feel less alone, but not any less perplexed.</p> <p>When you've got limited and public resources to allocate, you do (absolutely) need some system of priorities. If I had any more idea what it was to shift a boundary of knowledge, perhaps I'd see how doing so contributes to that.</p>	Identifying areas of agreement with P9's contribution.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2).	<p>Institutions disciplines must implement system of priorities.</p> <p>Most participants are confused with what is happening.</p>
PF12	P5	<p><b>Re: Transformative?</b> – I must say I have something of the same feeling, though I'm not a philosopher of science (and <i>its very good to have you here</i>). Some more ground clearing: the idea of transformation can either be a normative one, as in politics, or a descriptive one as in knowledge change. When you fail to distinguish the two, trouble follows. When we are talking about changes in knowledge, then 'transformation' signifies a large leap forward in what we know (paradigm change, perhaps, altho I've come to avoid this term because of its apocalyptic overtones ). As you say P6, it only makes sense to talk of this in relation to the actual scientific discovery that effects the change. Themes can't do that, nor any other kind of empty (ie scientific -</p>	Identifying areas of agreement with P9's contribution.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2).	<p>A colleague has joined the conference.</p> <p>Points or issues raised needs to be</p>

		<p>discoveryless) place. Ideas don't do it on their own either. What exactly does do it? From my vantage point as a sociologist of science, it is usually the product of a connected group of scientists working within a particular disciplinary framework that defines what is problematic in a specific way. The collective work - the '<i>standing on the shoulders of giants</i>' - though usually peaking in one person's endeavour, is what moves the game forward either a bit or a lot. This is all too brief. So to my point: innovation is not something you can 'make happen' by creating a 'space'. The flaw for me in this is to mistake the descriptive for the normative. You can't 'want' to change knowledge boundaries - they either change because you've made a breakthrough that, frankly, if its important these days will probably only be recognised by a small number of people, at least initially, and they will all be deep initiates in a highly specialised sub-discipline - or you don't.</p> <p>Now you might regard the above as a little unsympathetic to the entire endeavour of the workshop. Perhaps the organisers had in mind something like - ah, a wild guess, what if we all began working with Btuno Latour's idea that as far as society is concerned, there is no difference between humans and non-humans. Scary.</p> <p>But he means something quite technical by it, and in order to work productively with it - just look at the people he actually works with - you have to be actually working in the area. Taking ideas out of their context, is very rarely productive. I am beginning to think that we need a very specific starting point for this exchange, or else we would all be better off signing off and going back to pushing the envelope in our own knowledge communities. But perhaps I just have not read the online conference initiators piece: where exctly is it?</p>	<p>understanding</p> <p>Use of metaphors</p> <p>Referencing Latour.</p>		<p>taken in context than out of context.</p>
PF13	F1	<p><b>A new topic?</b> – <i>Hi P5</i>, Thanks for raising core issues about the role of disciplinary research in relation to cross/inter/trans-disciplinary research. I think this issue needs a new topic and I have created one in the "Open Space" forum.</p>	<p>Expressing gratitude and acknowledging P6's contribution</p>	<p>Legitimacy (DT6), Factual Information (TG2)</p>	<p>A new topic is available in another forum.</p>
PF14	F1	<p><b>A place where things break down</b> – Many of the messages in this</p>	<p>Prompting</p>	<p>Pragmatism (DT4),</p>	<p>A call to</p>

		forum have have described how good research can identify and shift disciplinary boundaries of knowledge. Discipline based researchers when our ways of knowing and understanding the world provide inadequate models for a complex, shifting reality. Discipline based knowledge broke down but there was also " a place to begin asking questions and setting new agendas. " <i>Do you have similar experiences to share from your discipline? What did your new agendas mean for the relationships between your discipline and other disciplines?</i>	participants contributions	Corporatism (DT2).	participants to share similar experience
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**Notions of Difference**  
(Appendix B continues)

Ref	Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
ND1 F1	<p><b>Opening Message</b> – Welcome to this discussion on the theme: "Notions of Difference". From analysis of the thought papers online conference initiators state:</p> <p>"We suggest that "Notions of Difference" have been explored in the submitted thought papers as a theme for the SSLH in South Africa. Examples through which</p> <p>Notions of Difference have been considered include: <i>Culture, diversity, sameness, multiculturalism, creative capacity, action building, globalization, HIV/AIDS, modernity/postmodernity, citizenship/non-citizenship, identity, youth, class, race, racism, race thinking, ethnicity, indigenous knowledge systems, migration, gender, visual/performing arts and science, urban/rural</i>"</p> <p>Lets start by considering three questions about Notions of Difference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the issues that are core to this theme?</li> <li>2. In what ways could this theme provide transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?</li> <li>3. In what ways could this theme serve to inspire and support SSLH in SA?</li> </ol>	Opening message for the discussion forum.	Factual Information (TG2). Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5).	New topics on aspects of the SBK are discussed

		There is a thread of conversation for each of these questions.			
ND2	F1	<b>Core Issues?</b> – What are the issues that are core to the theme of "Notions of Difference"?	Introducing a topic for discussion.	Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants to comment on the new topic
ND3	P13	<b>Re: Core Issues?</b> – I think we need to ask what differences are seen to matter to society...are the difference looked at internationally the same as in SA? Whilst it might be risky, perhaps different internal to "racial" communities in SA needs some focus. Here I particular I have in mind difference between sub-sets of the White category that has received very little research attention in the past two decades. Also <i>post-1994 transformation</i> and the development of differences in the "black" community could be interesting in understanding where are politics of the future might be going?	Identifying areas of agreement to theme of notions of difference	Factual Information (TG2).	Call to participants to discuss about post-1994 transformation, racial issues.
ND4	F1	<b>Re: Core Issues?</b> – P13, thanks for kicking off the discussion of core issues in "Notions of Difference". What do you think are the kinds of differences at issue here?	Acknowledging and prompting participant contributions	Legitimacy (DT5), Pragmatism (DT4).	More contribution needed from P13.
ND5	P13	<b>Re: Core Issues?</b> – I was wondering how white poor/rich/middle classes are relating to one another in the post-1994 context. How do they understand their place(s) in SA society, are they merely going to continue life as ever smaller and more isolated "communities", are they engaging the larger society, are they participating in the "participatory planning frameworks" that are so important in post-apartheid urban planning. Are these communities going to be by-standers or participant... ...and what are the outcomes of either these options. Similarly ...would like to know what the relationships are between different "black" cohorts. Is planning too concerned with "marginalised people", in the process leading to the ironic outcome of marginalising black (non-government) elites?...perhaps leading to a similar difference that shatters "black" identities"?? How do these different identities come together in our	Seeking an understanding on post-1994 issues.	Factual Information (TG2), Uncertainty (TG5).	Has the post-1994 brought about integration among classes (white poor/rich/middle).

		cities...indeed...do they come together in cities. Are South African cities going to be the ultimate "post-modern city" of countless disconnected individuals Ed Soja highlights in terms of Los Angeles. The ability/inability of understanding difference could lead to a disintegration of the planning frameworks that underpin our urban future. Cheers.			
ND6	F1	<b>Transformative?</b> – In what ways could the theme of “Notions of Difference” provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? Why? /Why not?	Introducing a new topic for discussion and reinforcing and participant contribution.	Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants to post their contribution
ND7	F1	<b>Serve SSLH?</b> – In what ways could the theme of "Notions of Difference" serve SSLH in South Africa?	Introducing new topic for discussion and reinforcing participant contribution.	Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants to post their contribution
ND8	P14	<b>Notions of difference</b> – 'Notions of difference' is an extraordinarily complex and slippery domain - one with which feminists have grappled for a long time, with disagreements amongst them reaching vehement heights at times. Put really simply, the debate goes along the lines of: Emphasising differences between men and women promotes sexism; Noting differences between men and women and emphasising women's positive attributes undoes patriarchy; Speaking of differences is essentialist and should be abandoned - it is not a valid field of investigation. I would say that the issue core to this theme would be to ask the question 'What are the political implications of emphasising difference or similarity? Whose interests are served? From whose perspective is difference or similarity viewed?' This acknowledges that difference and similarity are relative terms located within a socio-historical domain,	Suggesting change of discussion topic.  Political issues needs to be discussed instead.  Seeking	Factual Information (TG2),	Sexism discussions are fruitless.

		<p>that they may co-exist, that they are dynamic and complex, and that the choice of groups to compare is a political event.</p> <p>Whether notions of difference allow space for transformative ideas depends on your theoretical perspective. Standpoint theorists (such as radical feminists and black consciousness writers) would argue strongly that notions of difference are essential for transformation, given the history of oppression.</p> <p>I have some sympathy for this argument, but come back to the fundamental question of 'What are the political implications?' This is essential given that notions of difference underpinned Apartheid ideology.</p>	clarification .		
ND10	F1	<p><b>Re: Notions of difference</b> – I keep returning to P14's statement that: "Notions of difference" is an extraordinarily complex and slippery domain" and unequivocal statement that: "difference and similarity are relative terms located within a socio-historical domain, that they may co-exist, that they are dynamic and complex, and that the choice of groups to compare is a political event."</p> <p>Are there some kinds of difference that should be a priority for South African SSLH research? Are there other kinds of difference that should not be considered a priority for SSLH research in SA?</p>	Introducing topic discussion and reinforcing participant contribution.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants to post their contribution
ND11	P15	<p><b>Difference who's in who's out?</b> – The forum Notions of Difference - is a very inclusive one, as it calls to mind all human subjects in all cultures everywhere. I am - because of who I am not. There are differences within, between and across the categories that <i>we use to define our different</i> identities. And I am "included" or "outed" for as long as I 'help' to define another subject's sense of self and sense of association.</p> <p>As mentioned in the <i>Forum on Paradigmns</i> - I think that the research I do needs to be driven by global problematics that define life in the 21 century. This impulse commits me to identifying research problems that are invested in ensuring greater social equity for excluded groups (the poor - the infected - the silenced etc. It also commits my imagination to the design of innovative ideas, routes or technologies that have the</p>	Identifying areas of agreements and disagreements.  identifying research problems	Pragmatism (DT4), Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2).	Research should try to solve the global problems.

		<p>potential to ensure greater access to material and symbolic resources. It also compels my commitment to reflexive social processes (skills transfer - diagnosis - narratives etc) that stimulate agency (means, remedies and voices). It also entices me to find collaborators that can complexify the problem/s at hand and simplify the solution/s.</p> <p>The Social Sciences Law and Humanities (and education) have as a collective a lot to contribute to problematics that have, for the most part, been dominated by other disciplines in the natural sciences, engineering and medicine. <i>And it's up to us to insert our paradigms and methods into spaces and places where a research project would benefit from expanding the social dimension of an enquiry.</i></p> <p>This understanding of knowledge work in the 21 century inevitably calls for a realignment of scholars into differently configured groupings with similarly focused investments - where the problem and not the discipline has primacy of place.</p>			
ND12	P16	<p><b>ascribed group differences and citizenship</b> – A key issue: what are the implications of group-based differences for citizenship? Given that <i>we supposedly live in a democracy</i> in which all citizens are equal, <i>how do we square</i> the equality of citizens with group-based differences, especially the ascribed identities of race, ethnicity and gender? <i>Do we not run the risk</i> of circumscribing citizenship, or establishing a citizenship hierarchy, undercutting the notion of political equality central to democracy?</p> <p>Conversely, in the South African context, if some citizens experience discrimination on the basis of ascribed identities, then what steps should we take, and under what conditions, to realise political equality? In short, which special preferences do groups enjoy in our democracy, and which ought they to enjoy?</p>	Seeking an understanding from other participants.	Corporatism (DT2), Factual Information (TG2).	Calling participant for information on keys issues concerning race and citizenship in south African context.

## Space and Place (Appendix B continues)

Ref	Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)	
SP1	F1	<p><b>Opening Message – Welcome to this discussion on the theme:</b> "Space and Place". From their analysis of the thought papers by online conference initiators state that:</p> <p>"We suggest that the notion of "Space and Place" has been explored in the submitted thought papers as a theme for the SSLH in South Africa. Examples through which Space and Place have been considered include: <i>Environment, urban/rural, global/local, resource use, infrastructure and service delivery, household, ecology, poverty, security, crime, violence, gender, social work, youth, development, risk governance, transnational space, international public, urban/rural livelihoods, diaspora, migration, tourism, nation building, property, land, globalization, nationality, multinationals, poverty.</i>"</p> <p>Lets start by considering three questions about Space and Place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the issues that are core to this theme?</li> <li>2. In what ways could this theme provide transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?</li> <li>3. In what ways could this theme serve to inspire and support SSLH in SA?</li> </ol> <p>There is a thread of conversation for each of these questions.</p>	Opening message for the discussion forum and topics to be discussed.	Factual Information (TG2). Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5)	New topics on aspects of the SBK that has to be discussed
SP2	P13	<p><b>Re: Opening Message &amp; Core of Space and place</b> – To me this theme cuts to the very essence of what is missing in SA scholarship - somehow we have lost our ability to describe and understand the multiple spaces and places that are developing in the country. We tend to find a lot of historical understandings of space/place, but do we know about "now" places and spaces...and which places/spaces are we engaging in our research. As a geographer, obviously I am partial to this focus...but it draws things analytically together.</p>	Identifying areas of agreement to theme of space and place.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2)	SA scholarship cannot describe and understand the concept of space and place.
SP3	F1	<p><b>Why Space and Place Matters</b> – Thanks P13 for making such a strong</p>	Acknowledgement	Legitimacy (DT5),	Any comments

		case for the importance of "Space and Place"! Does anyone else have an overlapping or competing perspective to share?	of P13 comments	Corporatism (DT2).	from other participants.
SP4	P9	<p><b>Re: Why Space and Place Matters</b> – Thanks for the opener, P13. I want to propose that possibly one of the reasons why we have lost the ability to respond incisively to issues of space and place may be - and I put this very tentatively - that we have forgotten to take Kant seriously. In other words, we don't foreground the assumption that space and time are constitutive in human perception.</p> <p>This, in my view, might lead to a far richer and more humane approach. We would be less inclined to go crashing in with positivistic notions of the meaning of space and place, and more willing to explore the complexity of what different spaces and places might mean to different human beings, different communities and different life forms.</p>	Identifying of areas of agreement and disagreement.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).	Kant to be taken seriously.
SP5	P20	<p><b>Re: Why Space and Place Matters</b> – A quick coupla disclaimers to get going with. (1) I come from the world of theatre (a "subjunctive space" so to speak, where we are allowed to "fiddle" with time - hopefully not like Nero!) but more specifically because much of our so-called research then happens experientially and the "boundary" that we are trying to shift is the idea that the results of such experiential research may take forms that are not "bounded" by the rigors of Scientific presentation styles. (NRF, are you listening). Of course, this does not mean that we should not be "contained" by rigor (as P9 has so aptly argued in another Forum here -- I think on paradigms) -- indeed, much performance is extremely self-indulgent (am I binding myself here?), and we may end up with the "rules for acceptable art" stuff. (2) the second disclaimer is a more personal one, and that is that the theatrical demands (visual, oral, kinesthetic, sociological, historical, communicative, managerial -- could I have more paper please!) often leads us to a veneer of theoretical underpinnings, or what I call, for want of a better description, "exigency research". This becomes even more devastating when we have to do "art in the service of humanity" stuff, and aesthetics moves to the back of the queue (did I put aesthetics</p>	<p>Suggestive-Disclaimers</p> <p>Referencing P9's comments.</p>	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4) Technocracy (DT6).	<p>List of disclaimers – to take note.</p> <p>Different disciplines have different discourses.</p> <p>Changes to some of South African</p>

	<p>in the list?!) Applicable art -- now there's a term to wrestle with. The bottom line is that my theoretical underpinning might be "Philosophy 101" as they say in the "States" (another time and place consideration!). (One more disclaimer -- I am always puzzled by the propensity to remove agency from discussion -- there, I've done it myself. So if I appear to get personal, this is the reason. In one of the other forums P5 (I think -- if not I apologise -- I don't know how to navigate this "thang" yet to check the sources) has pointed out the dilemmas in the title of the conference, perhaps in this manner. Boundaries don't shift, some force shifts them. Can Knowledge be latent, or is it only knowledge when "in use" (there, I've done it again -- the Passive voice rears its ugly head!). If "shifting boundaries" means "to shift" (as opposed to using the "shifting" as an adjective - or participle (help me out, P9 or P17!) what does that mean for us? bottom line is it doesn't help to say "governemnt or education or academia should do this or do that" we need to acknowledge agency beyond the ubiquitous "they." (Okay, the blood-pressure is somewhat better now!)</p> <p>So . . . I think after all those disclaimers, I forgotten what I wanted to say! (Curses!) Oh yes, (I like the chattiness across "cyberspace!") what the theatre and the theatrical does allow is the reasonably safe 'space" to enter into debate around issues -- a subjunctive space as i mentioned earlier (I think the term is Pratt's) in which negotiations and experiences and "resistance rehearsals" can be shared. Of course, how safe the space is might be seen as a political function of economics or subsidy or personal agendas and so on.</p> <p>My work has been using Scott's idea of "onstage and offstage spaces and specific discourses that operate in those spaces." I argued that theatre was often used as a vehicle for introducing and presenting the offstage discourse (of the "oppressed" in broad terms) in the onstage space of the oppressor (again in broad terms) and acknowledging the "subjunctive" nature of the theatre ("it's only theatre, my dear!"). We see this in the work of Resistance theatre -- perhaps the easiest access to</p>			<p>cities.</p>
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		<p>this argument in in "Woza Albert!" and "Asinamali". but we also see it in the Trade Union theatre of the '80s and beyond, as well in the demands of "theatre for development" (DramAide and the like). Scott's work (particularly "Domination and the Arts of Resistance", as well as "Seeing like a State") presents very "attractive" arguments, and one's that I would like to pursue.</p> <p>Finally (classes beckon -- or, acknowledging my disclaimer -- I have to go to teach! And anyway are "classes" spaces, or learners, or political organisations, as Marx would have us believe? Given my background I better clarify that I refer to Karl, not Groucho!). Perhaps I can be provocative and state the argument I attempted to make in my "thought" paper (I always thought it was a "position" paper, but you can see how this would place me in a space! I prefer the virtuality (or virtuosity! Or subjunctive nature) of the thought. I tried to argue that "National Identity" can only come about if the offstage discourses of all have a space for articulation. Simple in statement, but trying to make the onstage "safe" so that the offstage can be declared with impunity is decidedly difficult. The renaming of Tshwane (or is it Pretoria, or was it, and is it Pitoli, or Tshwatoria as I have heard it named. Interestingly, our -- the Arts Campus' -- geographical location is in Tshwane, as proclaimed by the Council, but our postal address is in Pretoria (we are on the wrong side of the street!) And on that note "Viva liminality Viva!" (Or as we used to say "I am neither for nor against apathy!"). Cheers and thanks for the forbearance, So . . .my own work is built</p>			
SP6	P9	<p><b>Re: Why Space and Place Matters</b> – Hi P20 - good to hear from you. Just a quick thought. I wonder to what extent confusion is caused in our efforts to discuss genuine intellectual progress (which is what this conference is about) by our tendency to reify spatial metaphor in language? Think of the famous 'Open Space' Theatre: as with all theatres, the three-dimensional acting area was empty but bounded. As soon as a play was staged, the space was no longer open, except in relation to other non-present possibilities. When Popper wrote of the</p>	Acknowledgement and expression of gratitude.	Corporatism (DT2), Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4).	Plenty of good things that academics needs to bring out and that are not accessed through mechanical and statistical procedures.

		<p>'Open Society', he was talking about potentials in society as it is, and stressing those which led away from a dirigiste or totalitarian set of social arrangements. Again, the juxtaposition of an 'actual' and a 'potential'. P5 (I hope you are correct in identifying him as introducing this point) is right when he says that boundaries are moved by forces, but they are really forces that dissolve boundaries - perhaps 'resolve' would be a better word. The boundaries would still be there from the old standpoint; they are no longer cogent from the new.</p> <p>I am increasingly impressed by Schopenhauer's argument that in terms of perception ('representation' - including spatial, but also temporal and causal relations) subject and object are one: the upheaval, disruption (transformation?) follows from an irruption of desire (what is usually translated as 'will') that is unaccountable in or to the world as representation (the human perceptual and intellectual apparatus). That might explain why 'paradigm shifts', 'intellectual transformation', 'radical progress in research' and all the other good things that academics are supposed to be able to bring about, are not really to be accessed via a mechanical or mathematical intellectual procedure. That is also why, in response to P6 in the 'paradigms' forum, I rather flippantly suggested that perhaps we need to do less research and more thinking!!</p>	Referencing to statement from Schopenhauer's argument		<p>A change to approach.</p> <p>A proposal to do less research and concentrate more on metal thinking. The Complexity of what different spaces and places mean to people in different context.</p>
SP7	F1	<p><b>Re: Why Space and Place Matters</b> – Hi P9, Great to make contact with you , too. I shall warble throught some thoughts in reaction to your ideas. (I can't summon them to my screen to refer directly -- technology and all that, so forgive me if things go a little awry)</p> <p>First off, i take your point about the possiblity that we need to work less "literally" with titles. Nevertheless, it seems to me that it is not so much the literal use of the words, but the metaphorical which might "open up" the debate. Besides the fact that theatre is perhaps a "living metaphor", it is specifically the creation of the metaphor that interests me. I am ploughing through the work of Lakoff and Johnson (okay, those in the back can stop sniggering now!) and specifically the idea that language</p>	<p>Identifying areas of agreements with P19's comments.</p> <p>Referencing to Lakoff and</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Humour (TG3).</p>	<p>Use of metaphors to name the conference title.</p>

	<p>and philosophy are intermingled. Indeed, obviously, philosophical statements (such as Schopenhauer's Will) are steeped in metaphor. L and J's point, however, is that the construction of the metaphors of philosophy are grounded in experience. (And the language of expression of that experience). Indeed, your use of the term "irrupted" (I think) posits the idea/metaphor of "containment" (There is another one that you yourself use earlier on). If "philosophy is a container" as a central metaphor, then "irruption" must come from pressure within or without (Movement within, or "heat" as a metaphor, without). Should this hold, then the elements of the "known" (the container) allow us to deal with some of the metaphors that we develop from there (this is standard): things like "Words contain ideas" (or ideas contain words), we need to "lift the lid off" the unknown, Pandora's box, the limits of the argument, heated exchanges, subduing the Will, and so on.</p> <p>To continue the idea, If "Knowledge has boundaries" which we are now asked to "shift", the the "knowledge is a container" metaphor holds as well. But boundaries are formed to keep in and keep out (perhaps) so metaphorically we can include and exclude knowledge, we can create boundaries (artificial or otherwise, and there is an interesting thought), and what is it that the poem says "Good fences make good neighbours?" Indeed, what are the neighbours, and what of the fence sitter (and is that "deconstruction?!"), what are the fences of knowledge (and what happened to the Maginot line, and is that happening in Zimbabwe?!). this line of thinking might help me understand Schopenhauer's "Will", Nietzsche's Dionysiac, Artuad's (. . . well anything about Artuad!) and so on.</p> <p>If Lakoff and Jonson are onto something, then the Will and stuff make sense (note the metaphoric connection to "the senses," and therefore making sense brings pleasure, perhaps, or "clarity" -- the visual metaphor, or "harmonious",) and it falls then into either the Law (2nd I think) of Thermodynamics -- heat it up, keep the lid on and wait for the new paradigm to explode on us! (Which is what others will do to ideas)</p>	<p>Johnson work concerning metaphors.</p>		
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		<p>Or it falls into "inspiration" (the "breathing into or onto" metaphor) reminiscent perhaps of the expectations of the Romantics (now there is a gross simplification! sorry P9!)</p> <p>Now I get to the really really tentative stuff. If the argument holds, then metaphor clusters demonstrate (as it were) thinking patterns and systems of understanding. And these might be (indeed are, if Fish has anything to do with it) between communities, but are shared by communities (if Benedict Anderson has anything to do with it). If I couple this to onstage and offstage discourses (In Scott's sense) (Sorry about the shorthand namedropping thing that appears to be going on -- it is just shorthand) then we have metaphors that migrate according to power games between communities. And we have "spaces" where new metaphors (or emerging metaphors) are "rehearsed." Perhaps the word "transformation" is a classic example of this -- the word has already been taken to mean change for the better (the original metaphor) but now implies only "racial transformation" and what that brings. different communities see this change in different ways. Finally, what is useful then in my field is to see whether theatre and the theatrical can be a place where these "metaphor migrations" take place -- a "try-out" as it were, to extend the theatre metaphor! I am enjoying the work from all. Thanks</p>			
SP8	F1	<p><b>Core issues?</b> – What are the issues that are core to the theme of "Space and Place"?</p>	Drawing in participants and prompting discussions	Legitimacy (DT6).	New topic of discussion introduced
SP9	P13	<p><b>Core issues?</b> – Cities and towns beyond the usual suspects - Johannesburg/ Durban/ Cape Town. How are South African urban residents understanding their urban reality? What does this mean for planning frameworks? If we understand place/space differently and have no means of getting to understand these different interpretations of space/place, how do we plan cities. This is very important in terms of planning frameworks such as Integrated Development Planning and</p>	A set of questions about urban reality in South Africa.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2).	Cities and towns development plans

		<p>Local Economic Development. I guess in making such a claim a core issue in terms of the research we might consider to do, is Policy development and application research.</p> <p>One problem of doing so is that we can marginalise the "international reach" of our research outcomes. This is problematic in terms of trying to integrate ourselves with international scholarship and repeat the "South Africa as too unique" problem we experienced during apartheid. However, I am sure there will be themes common to international (I suppose Anglo-American) policy discourse. LED is certain a terrain where SA experiences can make a major contribution to the international debates.</p>			
SP10	F1	<p><b>Transformative?</b> – In what ways could the "Space and Place" theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? Why?/Why not?</p>	Drawing in participants and prompting discussions	Legitimacy (DT6).	New topic of discussion introduced
SP11	F1	<p><b>Serve SSLH?</b> – In what ways could the "Space and Place" theme serve SSLH in South Africa?</p>	Drawing in participants and prompting discussions	Legitimacy (DT6).	New topic of discussion introduced
SP12	P11	<p><b>Prestwich Street</b> – Following P9's line on recalling the complexity of what different spaces and places mean to people in different contexts: I've recently been doing work on the contested exhumation of human remains from an early colonial burial site in Green Point, Cape Town (the Prestwich Street exhumations) which powerfully focuses some of these issues. If you don't know the history, the site was "accidentally" discovered in the course of demolition activities in Green Point as part of a redevelopment project. Like many other burial sites in Cape Town it is undocumented - i.e. not part of the official colonial archive - and would have been a site of burial for a cross section of the urban poor (including slaves). A Public Participation Process was carried out in tandem with the exhumation of about 500 bodies (rather than preceding exhumation - a point of contention). During the three public meetings</p>	Narrative of exhumation of human remains	Factual Information (TG2),	<p>Burial sites are not well documented.</p> <p>The unavailability of undocumented burial sites in Cape Town</p>

		<p>which were part of this process, and then during the protest activities and mass actions coordinated by the Hands Off Prestwich Street Committee, a range of discourses, intentions, values, conceptions of past times and "heritage", come into collision in spectacular fashion, around core issues of public memory, restitution, citizenship, and so on. Tragic, often depressing, but at the same time deeply, interestingly informative about the state and nature of discipline based knowledges (in the case of archaeology and history), public scholarship, the relation between science and society in the postcolony, and so on. It seems to me that when you review a case like this you are close to a "boundary of knowledge" (whatever that means): a place where things break down; a place of high emotion, of accusation and counter-accusation; part of the wild zone. Tragic, yes; ironic, yes; but also *fertile*, a place to begin asking questions and setting new agendas.</p>			
SP13	F1	<p><b>New Agendas</b> – Hi P11, thanks for sharing this most engaging research tale. What do you think the new agendas are likely to mean for the relationships between archaeology and other disciplines?</p>	Expressive – gratitude and acknowledging to P11 contributions	Legitimacy (DT6).	gratitude and acknowledging and new topic of discussion introduced
SP14	P9	<p><b>Prestwich Street</b> – Nice example P11, that's just what I'm getting at. Space is always invested with the deeply conflicted agendas of human perception. This is so even when we attempt to empathise with other life forms - a theme that seems to be driving J.M. Coetzee's recent work (Disgrace, Lives of Animals and Elizabeth Costello).</p>	Acknowledging P11 narrative scenario and identifying areas of agreements.	Factual Information (TG2) Corporatism (DT2).	
SP15	P11	<p><b>Re: Prestwich Street</b> – Yup, so what you end up with is a series of entanglements - necessary entanglements I would say, around issues of race, culture, identity, and so on. But I would also say that there are ways of sorting through these, of making sense and finding meaning. What becomes interesting at a site like Prestwich Street is the extent to which the different interests speak passed one another, with very little sense of a shared language, set of concepts in common etc. Individual words (like "memory" and "respect") shift their meaning according to</p>	identifying areas of agreements	Corporatism (DT2), Factual Information (TG2). Pragmatism (DT4).	Participants discussions are talking passed one another is deliberate and strategic.

		context. What you find is the generation of a lot of "surplus" affect in the form of anger, hurt feelings, suspicion, threats, plots, and so on. Lots of fear and loathing. It's partly about different perceptions/representations etc. but it's also - centrally - about politics, vested interests, and so on. My sense is that a lot of the talking passed one another is deliberate and strategic.			
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**Knowledge and Agency**  
(Appendix B continues)

Ref		Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
KA1	F1	<p><b>Opening Message</b> – Welcome to this discussion on the theme: "Knowledge and Agency".</p> <p>From their analysis of the thought papers the online conference initiators state:</p> <p>"We suggest that the notion of "Knowledge and Agency" has been explored in the submitted thought papers as a theme for the SSLH in South Africa. Examples through which Knowledge and Agency have been considered include: <i>Language, gender, race, racism, race thinking, ethnicity, HIV/AIDS, healing, leadership, emancipation, youth, identity, learning, curriculum, entrepreneurship, innovation, participation, development, nation building, IKS, creative capacity, inequality, class, identity, music, resource use, environment, globalization, risk, democracy, poverty, curriculum, transformation.</i>"</p> <p>Lets start by considering three questions about Knowledge and Agency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What are the critical issues in this theme?</li> <li>2) Does this theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?</li> <li>3) Can this theme serve to inspire and support Social Science, Law and Humanities in South Africa?</li> </ol> <p>There is a thread of conversation for each of these questions</p>	Welcome statement and reinforcing participant's contributions.	Factual Information (TG2). Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5)	participant's has to contribute towards the three questions

KA2	P27	💡 <b>Re: Opening Message</b> – My field of research is Competitive Intelligence (CI) and its role in enhancing the competitiveness of South African firms - and then in current research: the role of CI in enhancing South African exports. The whole aim of practising CI is for managers 'to make sense of the overload of information', in order to make strategic decisions. It is more than KM (Knowledge Management). The CI process has, according to our research, phases or constructs, namely planning and focus, collection of info, analysing of the data, evaluating and interpreting as well as communication of the results. Underlying these phases are the necessary elements of CI culture and awareness as well as process and structure to make CI possible. I would like to know of other researchers working in this field or interested in this exciting new business discipline. Kind regards,	Narrative of areas of expertise.  Expressive – gratitude	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2),	Calling other researchers working in the field of Competitive Intelligence (CI).
KA3	F1	💡 <b>Call for colleagues</b> – Welcome P27! Is anyone else working the in areas of knowledge management or competitive intelligence?	Enforcing participants contributions	Legitimacy (DT6).	A call on other participants working on CI projects to contribute.
KA4	P25	📖 <b>Re: Opening Message</b> – I would like to add to P25s' remarks about Competitive Intelligence and its role in innovation, competitiveness and generally in promoting a culture of competitiveness in South Africa. A conference on intelligence for innovation to achieve competitiveness is being held at the end of May in Gauteng. Highlighting the role of interpreted information in achieving competitiveness is of high importance in a country that struggles to improve its global competitiveness ranking.	Informative	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT2)	Information of the upcoming CI conference for other participants to take note of that.
KA5	P27	<b>Re: Call for colleagues</b> – Dear F1, Are you asking me - or everyone else in the loop?	Seeking clarification	Corporatism (DT2).	Clarification from F1 if the message was addressed to P27.
KA6	F1	<b>Re: Call for colleagues</b> – Actually I was wondering if you have other colleagues with the same disciplinary base in Shifting Boundaries who	Clarification	Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2).	

		want to join the conversation here 😊			
KA7	P25	<p><b>Re: Call for colleagues</b> – Dear F1, Yes, P25, P29 en P1. We presented a paper at the NRF Shifting boundaries conference at Cape Town together - on the role of CI (Competitive Intelligence) in enhancing competitiveness - and the role that CI can play in shifting knowledge boundaries.</p> <p>For all of you - check out the website - <a href="http://www.abc.org">www.abc.org</a> for a conference we A (B Campus), Univ of X, Y Univ of Z and the main organisers, EFD are hosting on 26 and 27 May 2005 in M on Competitive Intelligence for Innovation. 3 international guest speakers are presenting together with a panel of SA speakers. There is also a half-day workshop on CI research and teaching in SA with presentations on the status of teaching and research of CI in SA as well as in the rest of the world. The facilitator will be Dr. Y - the newly elected president-elect of international (Society for xyz). The NRF will also be represented. For more details on the programme: <a href="http://www.abc.org">www.abc.org</a> . Many regards,</p>	Informative	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2)	More useful information the upcoming CI conference
KA8	F1	<p>🔍 <b>Core Issues?</b> – What are the issues that are core to the theme of "Knowledge and Agency"?</p>	Drawing in participants and prompting discussions	Legitimacy (DT6).	New topic of discussion introduced
KA9	F1	<p>🔍 <b>Transformative?</b> – In <i>what ways could</i> the theme of "Knowledge and Agency" provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? Why? /Why not?</p>	Drawing in participants and prompting discussions	Legitimacy (DT6).	New topic of discussion introduced
KA10	F1	<p>🔍 <b>Serve SSLH?</b> – <i>what ways could</i> the theme of "Knowledge and Agency" serve SSLH in South Africa?</p>	Drawing in participants and prompting discussions	Legitimacy (DT6).	New topic of discussion introduced
KA11	P28	<p>📖 <b>Knowledge and agency</b> – Hmm, no messages in this forum yet. I have just been reading a fascinating <i>paper by B of University of S</i> in which he discusses the agency-structure dilemma (otherwise known, I think, as the individual/society divide). Is knowledge (or perhaps</p>	Informative and seeking to reach understanding.	Factual Information (TG2), Uncertainty (TG5).	Referencing interesting article that other participants should

		discourse) the link between the two? Should this area not be titled 'Knowledge, agency and structure'?			be aware of and take note.
KA12	P11	<p>▣ <b><i>disciplines and their histories</i></b> – After tip-toeing nervously around the site last week, I thought I should get around to posting. Not too much activity, and most of it directed towards problematising the terms of reference, intention etc. of the present exercise. I must say, often these "ground clearing" exercises can seem like the intellectual equivalent of slash-and burn. Does anyone have the courage to plant in the ashes?</p> <p>Part of the problem is with the <i>medium ("the environment")</i> poised <i>uneasily between the permanence of print and and the informality of spoken dialogue</i>. These are words (ill considered, off the cuff) which can certainly come back to haunt one... Not much inducement to hang out in the cafe, or play in the sandpit.</p> <p>Having said that (my own bit of ground clearing?), here goes. I find it difficult to think through what it means to consider scholarship, knowledge, shifting boundaries and setting agendas divorced from a consideration of the history and contexts of individual projects of knowledge production (disciplines?), their formation through the last 150 years or whatever, and their fortunes in the contexts of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. How did they practice? What accommodations and compromises were reached? How did a given social context interact with the setting of research agendas, the thinking through of particular issues, the framing and naming of entities? In the case of my own discipline, archaeology, there is a compelling case to be made that at every stage the problematics of deep time, human biological and cultural evolution, the formulation of notions of race, Africanness, humanness, and the like (which are the stuff and subject matter of archaeology) took place in dialogue with a given intellectual and political context. To use a broadly Foucauldian terminology, the formation of fields of knowledge (the Southern African Iron Age, Prehistory) and knowledge objects (the Bantu, the various</p>	<p>Identifying areas of disagreements.</p> <p>Seeking to reach consensus/understanding.</p>	<p>Uncertainty (TG5), Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Humour (TG 3), Technocracy (DT6).</p>	<p>Familiar with postings of the conference.</p> <p>Problems of online communications.</p>

	<p>archaeological "cultures", Australopithecus etc) existed in a kind of dynamic interaction with notions of settler nationalism, what Dubow called the South Africanisation of the sciences in the early part of the last century, anxieties around issues of race and identity, and so on.</p> <p>This is not to say that all knowledge is relative and becomes a kind of pale reflection of social and political contexts, but rather to make the much more interesting observation that thinking through projects of knowledge production involves thinking through the complex, ironic, *interesting* kinds of relations that exist between a given project and its social context. Mudimbe has a nice line in <i>The Invention of Africa</i> where he says how do we deal with a situation where not only the answers, but the questions themselves and the archives from which to answer them, are framed - he says - by particular colonial histories. <i>If we follow this line, it seems to me there are a rich set of opportunities for engaging with the details of particular disciplinary histories, interrogating their core practices and guiding ideas, looking at the relation between metropolitan theory and local issues and concerns, problematising archives and objects - and, maybe - pushing boundaries/paradigms or whatever.</i></p> <p>In archaeology there are some exciting discussions going on in fields like Indigenous Archaeology and Public Archaeology around issues of agency, ownership, reburial and repatriation of remains, and so on. Also, interestingly, these discussions have explicitly NOT been part of the local archaeological scene and literature, but are part of a global literature coming out of Latin American critiques of under-development, Native American and Aboriginal concerns with cultural and heritage rights, and so on. So one has to ask why these debates haven't been localised? What the local archaeological set-up looks like? I want to say more in another part of the forum about the recent blow-up around the contested exhumation of human remains from the Prestwich Street site in Cape Town, but that's enough for here. Back to the sandpit to build castles...</p>	<p>Referencing Mudimbe</p>		<p>Sharing of exciting discussions happening in the archaeology department.</p>
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KA13	P16	<p><b>Knowledge and citizenship</b> – A key issue: what are the knowledge pre-conditions for meaningful citizenship in SA? By this I mean, what skills and knowledge does one need to vote, to participate in public forums, public debates, to engage the political spaces of our system. Further, what are some of the cultural and ‘material’ pre-conditions for this – education clearly, but how much, in what language, etc? What level of income, resources, health, security do people need before they can become active citizens? Given the inequalities of poverties of our society, how many people are in a position to be active citizens? A minority it seems to me. Lastly, what does it mean to have a nominally democratic system comprised of, by and run for citizens, when the majority cannot be citizens in a meaningful sense?</p>	<p>Seeking clarification and to reach consensus and understanding.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Neutrality (DT1), Legitimacy (DT6).</p>	<p>Seeking contributions from other participants to issues raised.</p>
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**Rules, Regulations, Entitlements, and Social Justice**  
(Appendix A continues)

Ref	Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
RR1	F1	<p><b>Opening Message</b> – Welcome to this discussion on the theme: "Rules, Regulations, Entitlements, and Social Justice". From their analysis of the thought papers online conference initiators state: "We suggest that the notion of “Rules, Regulations, Entitlements, and Social Justice” has been explored in the submitted thought papers as a theme for the SSLH in South Africa. Examples through which Rules, Regulations, Entitlements and Social Justice have been considered include: <i>Human rights, social justice, equity, governance, democracy, unemployment, multiculturalism, nation building, economics, public interest, creative capacity, public administration and management, morality, ethics, values, (non-) citizenship, nationality, class, leadership, emancipation, difference, transformation, entrepreneurship, risk governance, globalization, ideology, policy, employees, employment, occupation, labour relations, gender.</i>" Lets start by considering three questions about Rules, Regulations, Entitlements and</p>	<p>Opening statement of the discussion forum</p> <p>Stating topics of discussions.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5).</p> <p>New topics on aspects of the SBK are discussed</p>

		<p>Social Justice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the issues that are core to this theme?</li> <li>2. In what ways could this theme provide transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?</li> <li>3. In what ways could this theme serve to inspire and support SSLH in SA?</li> </ol> <p>There is a thread of conversation for each of these questions.</p>			
RR2	F1	<p><b>Critical Issues?</b> – What are the critical issues in the theme of "Rules, Regulations, Entitlements and Social Justice"?</p>	<p>State topic of discussions. Encourage contributions from participants.</p>	<p>Legitimacy (DT5), Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Participants to post their contribution</p>
RR3	P17	<p><b>Re: Critical Issues?</b> – Constitutionally, members of society are entitled to certain socio-economic rights as encapsulated in the Human Rights Chapter. The constitutionalization of the primary objective of the Reserve Bank in section 224, also endeavours to create a balance between economic growth for the achievement of social justice. Economic growth is required to generate revenue in order to give effect to promises of social justice. The law thus provides for rights that could meaningfully contribute to the economic rehabilitation of impoverished communities. It is, however, realized that poverty will not be eradicated overnight, but it does establish priorities that must be addressed by government. Unlike certain other rights. such as the right to legal representation in criminal matters, these rights are to be progressively realised. The main issue is that any attempt to achieve social justice will require a concerted, interdisciplinary approach as the law, the administration and the economy cannot operate in isolation.</p>	<p>Stating the Human Rights Chapter.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG 2), Pragmatism (DT4).</p>	<p>Socio-economic rights entitled for members of society.</p>
RR4	F2	<p><b>Re: Critical Issues?</b> – Thanks P17 for you interesting contribution! What do others think about the statement: "The main issue is that any attempt to achieve social justice will require a concerted, interdisciplinary approach as the law, the administration and the economy cannot operate in isolation." What is the current situation in</p>	<p>Acknowledging participant's contribution.</p>	<p>Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>A call to other participants to comment on the social justice</p>

		South African regarding this issue?			
RR5	P17	<p><b>Re: Critical Issues?</b> – It cannot be doubted that innovative cooperation is the future for the achievement social justice in SA. Sometimes, rules are obstacles. An example is the fact that a monopoly is created by law in terms of which only certain people can practice law, ignoring the realities of the situation. This is a developed country principle that is applied in a developing society, failing to take note of the needs that exist. <i>There is a tendency to look to developed countries for guidance to solve or alleviate problems, whereas more often than not, the answer is to be found in comparable jurisdictions or within ourselves.</i> A recent survey I did on a limited scale (with regard to legal needs and the provision of legal aid services) revealed some very interesting facts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We establish services aimed at achieving or improving justice based on what services we are capable of rendering and not based on the needs that exist.</li> <li>2. There is a greater willingness between different services providers operating in similar arenas to cooperate than we think. Although the tendency to "protect territory" exists, we need "activators" and in many ways these "activators" can be universities and other research institutions.</li> </ol> <p>It is my opinion that the abovementioned institutions are not doing enough with their research results to influence policy and informed decision-making.</p>	<p>Stating areas of agreement to discussions.</p> <p>Stating facts.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Adoption of developed society principles needs to stop.</p>
RR6	F1	<p><b>Transformative?</b> – Does the "Rules, Regulations, Entitlements and Social Justice" theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? Why?/Why not?</p>	<p>Introducing a topic for discussion</p>	<p>Legitimacy (DT5).</p>	<p>Participants to post their contribution</p>
RR7	P17	<p><b>Re: Transformative?</b> – It is difficult to determine the role played by law in the economical and social development of a country. In South Africa it is accepted that law can be a catalyst to social change and the system provides for a wide approach that is inclusive of broader ways of improving the position of people. However, it should be borne in mind that without exception, economical development increases the</p>	<p>Stating facts about legal services.</p> <p>Demonstrate awareness of legal services.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4).</p>	<p>A call for innovative research within the SSLH community.</p>

		<p>need for legal services - particularly amongst the needy. Care must be exercised that the availability of legal services, in view of the greater demand, does not decrease. There are two inherent challenges locked up in the above statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is needed to indicate the role played by Law in development; and</li> <li>2. Innovative ways are to be found to provide for the need for legal services to the poor and almost poor.</li> </ol>			
RR8	F1	<p><b>Serve SSLH?</b> – In what ways could the "Rules, Regulations, Entitlements and Social Justice" theme serve SSLH in South Africa?</p>	Introducing a topic for discussion	Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5)	Participants need to post their contributions
RR9	P17	<p><b>Re: Serve SSLH?</b> – Policymakers rarely consider research and research results that are capable of guiding them. Designing shemes from the top down is at the order of the day, often resulting in service delivery not based on the needs of society. One of the clearest examples is the provision of legal aid servioeces in SA. Government sees the provision of legal representation in criminal matters as sufficient, whereas the general perception of society is that the legal system is there for criminals. SSLH research should inform policy makers and processes for improving the provision on services and for utilising existing resources more effectively to give effect to the developmental objectives of the country. This will require innovative, collaborative thinking.</p>	Stating concerns.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).	Change in approach in policy making from top-down to bottom-up. SSLH research community can play a role in the change.
RR10	P18	<p><b>Content?</b> – I find it very difficult to contribute to such an <i>open-ended conversation</i>. I assume that this forum will eventually be the one where most legal research will fit in. But how does one know this? How do you, for example, define "entitlements"? In its narrow, private-law meaning or is it wider than that? (The same applies, of course, to terms like "rules" and "regulations".) And what exactly do you mean by social justice? As far as I know this term means very different things in different philosophies. For example, social justice in traditional liberal thinking (like that of John Rawls) is a very different kettle of fish from</p>	Assessing the efficacy of the theme under discussion.	Uncertainty (TG2), Factual Information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6)	<p>Not comfortable to contribute in the forum.</p> <p>Questioning the content of the theme under discussion.</p>

		African philosophy. So my contribution is more in the nature of a request for clarification than anything else.			
RR11	F1	<b>Meanings...</b> – Thanks for this message P18. I appreciate the way that you have emphasised the ideologically and politically contested nature of the terms - I think in this way you have contributed a key issue within this theme!	Acknowledging participants' contribution.	Neutrality (DT1), Corporatism (DT2)	ideologically and politically naming of themes
RR12	P15	<b>Rule... whose game?</b> – Thanks P18 for questioning the content of this theme - it helped to free my own thinking. I do not think it is productive to try to box the disciplines into forums - this will exclude participants from considering the implications of a theme for their own work. So let me eat my own words and say how I see this theme in relation to the contributions that I have made to the Forums Paradigms and Notions of Difference today. I am interested in what it means to do research beyond my discipline... in the space/s where different disciplines come together to research a common problem. What rules, regulations and entitlements will such a group need to ensure that they work productively together. How will such a group monitor individuals contributions? - what will be done to ensure that each scholar is heard...? How will individuals in such a group know what the other means to communicated? - will a common language (understanding of a set of discourses) emerge or be prescribed? Which discourses are more entitled to space - and/or primacy of place? What will it mean to complexify a common problem from the vantage points of the different scholars that are entitled to participate? Which scholars' version of reality will be accepted - or regulated - or excluded. What will it mean to find simple solutions to complex problems? How will the group manage dissent within its ranks? - and what impact will this have on the validity of the research findings and recommendations? I don't propose answers to any of these questions as the 'space' in which they would be defined by real actors is for me still empty. I surface them as I expect they will become important in sustaining hybrid groupings where a 'new' set of ethics of collaboration will be required. Off the top of my	Expressing gratitude.  Stating areas of agreement  Seeking to reach an understanding.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).	A call to participants to comment to the question raised.

		<p>head I risk the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. respect - mutual respect</li> <li>2. willingness to clarify what one means</li> <li>3. willingness to risk not understanding what someone else means</li> <li>4. avoidance of contestation for contestation sake</li> <li>5. when encountering difference of opinion - try to stand in the others shoes, to better see what is at stake... etc.</li> </ol> <p>Can u add to this brainstorm?</p>			
RR13	F1	<p><b>Don't box me in</b> – I am in <i>full agreement with the statement</i> that it is unproductive to "to try to box the disciplines into forums - this will exclude participants from considering the implications of a theme for their own work." The themes don't have a close mapping to disciplines. These were identified by online conference initiators in their analysis of the concept papers. <i>If you go to the opening messages for the themes you will see that each theme relates to examples across several disciplines and examples from any particular discipline will be present in several themes.</i> So participants are encouraged to post where-ever a theme engages their interest.</p>	Stating areas of agreement to participant's contribution.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Neutrality (DT1).	Participants can post comments in whichever forum.
RR14	P19	<p><b>Disciplinary Boundaries</b> – I am not sure that it is necessary to begin with an introduction but for reasons that I think will be apparant shortly I will. I am an <i>American Professor of Criminal Justice teaching in the U.S. I was extremely fortunate last year to have been on a Fulbright exchange with the Department of social at Y University</i> and it was through this experience that I have come to participate in this conference. I might also mention, as a matter of clarity, that in the U.S. Criminal Justice as a discipline is not affiliated with a law education program (Law School). It is generally considered to be part of the larger social science environment, although I might also say that attempting to force a disciplinary identity by this even broader classification is also too restrictive. We are linked by a common interest, but not a common discipline in a more traditional sense. I have been reading from all of the forums up until now as I have been trying to identify more clearly</p>	Self-introduction, stating areas of research expertise.	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Confidence (TG1), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	<p>Observations noted in the conference.</p> <p>Collaboration of different perspective is a norm amongst disciplines in the USA to address intellectual problems works.</p>

		<p>the goals of the conference, to develop a sense of where I am in the conversation. Having said all of this let me make a few general observations on where I think I am in relation to the conversation. I am a member of a department that has brought together a number of colleagues of diverse personal and theoretical backgrounds. What links us is our common interest with concerns about crime and justice. This interest is not narrowly restricted to criminal justice as criminal justice must (my view) be informed by larger questions of social justice. At the risk of "boxing" people in let me make some broad generalizations about my colleagues. One takes a strong evolutionary stance on both individual and social behavior as well as a strong grounding in epistemology. A second might be characterized as a Durkheimian functionalist. A third is informed by developmental theory while a fourth draws more strongly on feminist theory. Finally, I take more of a phenomenological perspective. We experience a great collective chemistry as a working group drawing upon this diversity of perspectives but not always in agreement with one another. As a consequence each of us is forced to reflect on our own perspectives, to take account of a diversity of standpoints. In the process each of us is feeding off one another in a dynamic environment. Without belabouring the point, is the experience I am describing anything like what we are engaged in in this conference? I am still seeking a frame of reference.</p>	<p>Stating areas agreement to topic under discussions</p>		
RR15	F1	<p><b>Re: Disciplinary Boundaries</b> – P19, <i>thanks</i> for sharing such a good example of collaboration from from varied disciplinary bases to address a shared intellectual problem. After reading this I wondered: 1) When no single discipline has primacy do you have to develop models from scratch to guide the joint research? 2) <i>Does anyone else have related (or contrasting) examples to share from their own work?</i></p>	<p>Acknowledging participants contributions Seeking clarification</p>	<p>Neutrality (DT1), Legitimacy (DT6).</p>	<p>Collaboration in the SSLH research community to intellectual problems.</p>
RR16	P16	<p><b>Re: Disciplinary Boundaries</b> – F1, normally the decision regarding a specific research project begins either at the behest of a single faculty member or is motivated by a funded research request for proposal, quite often by our <i>B (Y)</i>. <i>For ease of continuity let me use the A example. BC</i></p>	<p>Stating purposes of National Institute of Justice.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Legimaticy (DT5), Corporatism (DT2),</p>	<p>The process of submitting research proposal to NIJ and the assessment</p>

	<p><i>has two basic avenues for submission. One would be very specific to an XYZ initiative. The field is defined and disciplinary boundaries are strongly indicated. Essentially the submission is a response to a request for proposal (RFP). The second process is more open ended. X establishes what are the equivalents of focus areas in the NRF. Within these focus areas researchers are free to submit their own funding proposals. Award determinations are based on the quality of a proposal as determined by the scope of the project, the methodology, SKA's of the project team, fit with focus area, etc. These are all very traditional protocols. It is in the scope of a research proposal that one generally finds the inter/multi/transdisciplinary collaboration. Each individual contributes his/her strengths to the project. In practice only very comprehensive and long term funding requests will employ multiple theoretical perspectives and methodologies. I must also say that if there is a very wide variance in regard to epistemological assumptions and specific methodologies it becomes extremely difficult to establish and coordinate a collaborative research project. And certainly if one is engaged in theory testing multiparadigm projects are pretty much beyond question.</i></p> <p>I think that the best projects are those that are focused on a shared problem interest but can be addressed from a multidisciplinary perspective. What we try to avoid is disciplinary reductionism. Because we very often are specifically interested in human behavior/action/practice a more comprehensive understanding involves psychological/sociological/cultural/ biological dimensions. These are the boundaries that must be crossed to arrive at a more comprehensive research approach. I suppose we look for disciplinary synthesis. It is not always easy as sometimes underlying assumptions of human nature or epistemological assumptions that guide an individual researcher's "normal" research are so entrenched that cross disciplinary communication becomes impossible. Obviously under such a consideration collaboration will not move forward. It requires</p>	<p>Stating areas of agreement to topic under discussions.</p>	<p>Pragmatism (DT4).</p>	<p>process.</p> <p>Commitment from academics required for multi-transdisciplinary research to succeed in terms of time.</p>
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		<p>individuals willing to suspend for a period of time their commitments to theoretical/ methodological purity. I want to stop here as I am afraid that my response may appear a bit teachy/preachy and that I do not want. I am trying to respond a bit to your specific query. I also don't want to start confusing issues. I hope that what I have said does address your question sufficiently to at least continue a dialogue.</p>			
RR17	F1	<p><b>Success Factors for Multidisciplinary Research Projects – P19</b> Thanks for describing the scope for multidisciplinary projects within the B funding process. Your insights about the success conditions for multidisciplinary projects are also quite illuminating:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each individual contributes his/her strengths to the project.</li> <li>2. limited variance in regard to epistemological assumptions and specific methodologies focused on a shared problem interest that can be addressed from a multidisciplinary perspective.</li> <li>3. look for disciplinary synthesis.</li> <li>4. researchers willing to suspend for a period of time their commitments to theoretical/ methodological purity.</li> </ol> <p>Does anyone want to mention other success factors for multidisciplinary projects?</p>	Acknowledgement participant's contribution.	Neutrality (DT1), Factual Information (TG2).	A summary of P19's comments
RR18	P20	<p><b>Re: Success Factors for Multidisciplinary Research Projects – F1</b>, <i>did you really draft this after 8:30 last night! Great stuff.</i> P19, Hi, I am from Z --never knew you were there! Great meeting you. I suppose this is an example of one of the barriers that institutions need to break down -- letting the insitution know when scholars are visiting.) I think you <i>are spot on with your analysis and F1's summary is spot on.</i> In the Early days of Drama in Education work, for example, reading the bibliographies on the work you would discover many many references to Drama, and if you were lucky, one or two on Education. An assumption to be made was that "theatre people are inevitably good educationalists" (Horace caused the problem with his "delight and instruct" dictum, perhaps). Another possible asumption is that educationalists (at least at that time) were so concerned with</p>	<p>Stating areas of agreement with participant's contribution.</p> <p>Stating</p>	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3),	Constraints with multidisciplinary.

	<p>quantitative, verifiable data, that the arts didn't enter the equation. From my own field, for example, I have tried once to work with a Law Faculty on providing drama students to assist with Moot Courts. We ended up as a "service organisation." I still wish to pursue this -- perhaps when you are back in South Africa, Michael? My own experience with a multi/inter/transdisciplinary research project kicked up all the problems and tensions of which you speak. It is interesting to note that you seem to speak from the perspective of "going into" the project -- a willingness to negotiate differences (or at least an acceptance that differences are there), and so on. My own experience combined this with an "end-gaining" problem -- what were we going to do with the research, and in what format would it best be accepted (or at least reviewed). These are of course part of the "disciplinary boundaries" that you note. We were trying to do research in such a way that we could gather information in a form that would best suit the style of journal expectations that the bulk of the researchers were expected to engage in. Discipline drives methods which drives publication requirements which drives discipline. As soon as the different disciplines "clashed" (as you point out) we ended up speaking about how to get published with this "new" approach. (Mind you, the engagement was hugely stimulating but I'm not sure how far we got).</p> <p>The second constraint was the time one -- my experience is that multidisciplinary work inevitably makes huge demands on time. Part of that is the getting to know other disciplines stuff, part of it is negotiating a method of research (and data gathering) part of it is then democratically satisfying different demands, and part of that is teasing out shared conclusions from the multidisciplinary methods. The system that we used was Participatory Action Research (or Action Learning Action Research)(Zuber-Skerrit stuff) which means that the research was repeated three times as we tried to wend our way towards data that would meet "standards". And then it has taken us 2 years to get a journal interested. Bottom line -- from start to first publication -- 7</p>	<p>constraints.</p>		
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		years. Compare this to the Natural Sciences "rule setters", the controlled laboratories, and Natural sciences research industries, and the "publish or perish" demands, and one begins to see the problems. I'm not sure what to do about it. I simply offer the problem and the experience. O . . of course in my field there is always a reluctance to take us seriously! Cheers.			
RR19	P16	<b>citizenship as an elite construct</b> – A key issue: to what extent is the meaning of citizenship in South Africa constructed from above by the state through notions of what constitutes legitimate politics (proceduralism/ legalism/ individualism?), and how does it mesh with popular conceptions of politics ‘from below’ (survivalist/popular legitimacy/communitarian?). Is politics effectively premised on the colonisation of popular subjectivities by elite conceptions? What is the relation between legitimacy ascribed by the ‘common view’ and legitimacy ascribed by the law. Lastly, through what mechanisms are ordinary people ‘tutored in the ways of democratic righteousness’?	Seeking to reach an understanding	Legitimacy (DT5)	A call for contributions from other participants on citizenship in South Africa.
RR20	P20	<b>Re: citizenship as an elite construct</b> – I think your primary question, and the questions that follow (indeed, the questions that you have posed in other forums in the conference) are spot on. For what it is worth, I have been pursuing the thinking of James C Scott (specifically in his book "Domination and the Arts of Resistance.") What has been fascinating for me is the "separation" he makes (according to levels of "oppression" -- read "intimidation, desire to conform, peer-group pressure, contracts," etc) between "actual" resistance, expressed in "offstage discourse," and the discourse that is revealed in the public or onstage sphere. He suggests that what is said publically and what is said privately differ remarkably, and we need to be aware of the difference so that we can "mark" the "levels of honesty," for want of a better phrase. The debacle in SA rugby, for example, smacks rather well of this model in practice, as does (says he, tiptoeing dangerously) what is said in the tripartite alliance in forums, before elections, and outside forums. So when the "acceptable modes of discourse" are imposed from	Quoting from James C Scott book.  Stating areas of	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	An outline books the participant has read concerning.  A call to pay attention to off-stage discourse.

	<p>above then inevitably we may have a problem. This is perhaps exacerbated when "group expectations" are "constructed" (and perhaps Benedict Anderson's work is interesting here)"from above," again. This is perhaps exacerbated even further when the "constructed group expectations" are constructed from above in opposition to the constructed group expectations of the colonial era, so to speak.</p> <p>IN this regard, for example, the early work of Ari Sitas was fascinating for me, where he posits that this is the way things "should" have worked according to "theory," but when he became involved in the work of the TRade Union (theatre and then Praise poetry and then poetry in general) he found that it was not so -- the offstage ( in more senses than one in this case) and the "onstage" clashed, and to Sitas' credit he recognised this and pursued explanations for this, instead of imposing theory. wonderful work, in my view.</p> <p>Of course, if "agency is learned" (as opposed to be "ineherent in a political dispensation") then we reach again the questions that you so aptly raise. I suppose the point I am making for this conference is that we need to look at the "offstage discourse" far more than we do, otherwise our research may fall into "self-fulfilling prophecies" or at worst taking the onstage declarations as truth value.</p>	<p>agreement and disagreements.</p>		
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## Technology and Society

(Appendix B continues)

Ref	Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
TS1	<p><b>Opening Message – Welcome to this discussion on the theme: "Technologies and Society".</b></p> <p>From analysis of the thought papers online conference initiators state:                      "We suggest that the notion of "Technologies and Society" has been explored in the submitted thought papers as a theme for the SSLH in South Africa. Examples through which Technologies and Society have been considered include:</p>	<p>Opening statement message for the discussion forum.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2). Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5)</p>	<p>New topics on aspects of the SBK are discussed</p>

		<p><i>Infrastructure and service delivery, public interest, globalization, risk governance, creative capacity, unemployment, equity, democracy, household, environment, morality, ethics, values, gender, resources use, health, youth, innovation, science, security, crime, violence, multinationals, development, entrepreneurship, cities, visual/performance and other media of communication.</i></p> <p>Lets start by considering three questions about Technologies and Society:          What are the issues that are core to this theme?          In what ways could this theme provide transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge?          In what ways could this theme serve to inspire and support SSLH in SA?          There is a thread of conversation for each of these questions.</p>			
TS2	F1	<p><b>Core Issues?</b> – What are the issues that are core to the theme of "Technologiers and Society"?</p>	<p>Introducing a new topic for discussions.          Reinforcing participants' contribution.</p>	<p>Legitimacy (DT5)</p>	<p>Call for participants to post contributions to discussion.</p>
TS3	F1	<p><b>Transformative?</b> – In what ways could the "Technologies and Society" theme provide space for transformative ideas that shift our boundaries of knowledge? Why?/Why not?</p>	<p>Introducing a new topic for discussions.          Reinforcing participants' contribution.</p>	<p>Legitimacy (DT5)</p>	<p>Call for participants to post contributions to discussion.</p>
TS4	F1	<p><b>Serve SSLH?</b> – In what ways could the "Technologies and Society" theme serve SSLH in South Africa?</p>	<p>Introducing a new topic and reinforcing participants' to contribute.</p>	<p>Legitimacy (DT5)</p>	<p>Call for participants to post contributions to discussion.</p>
TS5	P15	<p><b>Why so quiet</b> – Hey guys - why is this theme so quiet? Are our</p>	<p>Seeking</p>	<p>Technocracy</p>	<p>Participants are not</p>

		paradigms and methods unaffected by technologies - or is technology beyond society? Its interesting cos the conference is making us use screens that keep us not personal but certainly upclose. My experience of <i>this online environment</i> is quiet different from 'the real thing' - and I am wondering how one can call an active user into a chat - cos seeing them there on the <i>right of my screen makes me feel</i> as if they are ghosts in the corridor rather than real life 'conference goers'. F1 can u help	clarification  Stating experiences.	(DT6), Techno optimism (DT3).	posting messages in the forum.  The conference lacking other facilities.
TS6	F1	<b>Contacting other participants</b> – Thanks P15 for this question. Unfortunately we don't yet have the grand integrated open source chat system so you can't just click on someones name and <i>quickly invite them to a chat</i> . There are some easy ways for participants to get in touch with other participants though. <i>Most participants have agreed to make their e-mail addresses available to other participants and participants can also click on the participant names at the top of an open message</i> eg "posted by P11" and in most cases this will open a new e-mail message which you can then complete and send to a colleague.	Acknowledging participant's contribution.	Technocracy (DT6), Techno optimism (DT3), Factual Information (TG2).	Messages of invite are sent through the email address to participant to converse on a discussion.

**Open Space**  
(Appendix B continues)

Ref		Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
OS1	F1	<b>Opening the Open Space</b> – This forum is for <i>new topics</i> started by conference participants. What aspects of Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge do you want to discuss?	Setting environment for discussion.	Factual Information (TG2).	New topics on aspects of the SBK are discussed
OS2	F3	<b>Re: Opening the Open Space</b> – Perhaps, a consideration of the forces which set boundaries as opposed to those which shift boundaries. ...is knowledge evolving from a phase where it was packaged in separate compartments to an emerging phase where it is bursting out of compartments and violating boundaries? What could be the driving force behind that? I wonder.	New topics suggested.	Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT5).	A call to participants to discuss setting than shifting boundaries
OS3	F1	<b>Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-</b>	proposition of a	Corporatism (DT2),	Call for participants

		<b>disciplinary Research</b> – Hi all, Some of the questions raised by P5 in PF12 .... seem to require a new topic because they go right to the heart of the debates about how <i>research communities</i> make progress with existing and emerging research agendas. What's your perspective on the relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research?	different topic to be discussed	Legitimacy (DT5) Factual Information (TG2).	to discuss about Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research
OS4	P22	<b>Re: Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research</b> – Hi, I have read all the messages regarding the paradigm topic and I must say it sound just like normal. It really does not help me. I am a health professional doing research with and for people in the community. As such, I need input and expertise of various disciples in which I have some training but never enough. I am also a very practical person. Philosophy is fine but it does not help a person in the community with a problem. At what point does the cross/inter/or trans-disciplinary research ever occur? In my mind there should be no debate about - it should just happen. In my experience, <i>researchers does research to be noticed and receive acclaim - rarely to be of help to somebody</i> . When it comes down to the question: Will you be available?, suddenly there is just the time factor. So even though the interdisciplinary nature of the topic is so desirable, what will have to happen to change people's actions on the ground?	Seeking the usefulness of discussions.	Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4), Uncertainty (TG5).	Inter-disciplinary research has to be carried out than debating about it.
OS5	P3	<b>Re: Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research</b> – ...the most significant problems of the 21st C (poverty, inequality, conflict, environmental decline etc) will require the perspectives of <i>more than one discipline to address them</i> . If one regards 'multi-disciplinarity' as the coming together of different disciplines without integration, and 'inter-disciplinarity' as the co-ordination of certain disciplines by another, then what appears to be needed is 'trans-disciplinarity' - combining understandings from disciplines so as to view the world in a more systemic and holistic way.	Identifying areas of agreement and disagreement.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	Looking at trans-disciplinary, inter-disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity to help solve the problems of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.
OS6	P6	<b>Re: Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-</b>	Contributing to	Pragmatism (DT4),	Research done

		<p><b>disciplinary Research</b> – All disciplines are in permanent states of (re)construction and (re)configuration. Worrying about the disciplines themselves, though, is like <i>worrying too much about being popular</i>. If you do the right sorts of things, you'll end up <i>more popular than if you don't</i>, or if you "try" to be popular directly. If you try to do <i>research properly, you might end up crossing or moving disciplinary barriers</i>, but that doesn't make any fact about those <i>barriers on their own indicative of anything</i>, ever, about whether research is good, or valuable, or is being properly done.</p>	topic under discussion.	Corporatism (DT2)	properly or not does not make a researcher more popular.
OS7	P5	<p><b>Re: Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research</b> – Most <i>problem-solving research</i> is <i>multidisciplinary</i>, because the problem is not neatly contained by any one disciplinary corpus. ...good research is invariably highly specialised. So <i>when you put a bunch of highly specialised people together, all talking different specialised languages, with different bodies of knowledge, criteria for evidence</i>, etc, then it can take a superhuman effort, usually from someone quite special, to <i>get something productive</i> going that does not regress to a kind of interdisciplinary lowest common denominator. Setting out to change disciplinary boundaries is as <i>paradoxical an activity</i> as setting out to fall in love. It might be the desired end state, but it makes no sense to pursue it as a direct goal.</p>	Identifying areas of agreement and disagreement.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2), Humour (TG3).	Good research is always multidisciplinary and specialised as well as an inconsistent activity.
OS8	P11	<p><b>Re: Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research</b> – How strange to have to have to revisit and *defend* a notion of interdisciplinary again, I thought that this particular <i>battle was fought and won some time ago</i>. ...it's striking how the disciplines have been reified in some of the discussion thus far as bounded, internally coherent and unified entities, which stand over and against something called inter-disciplinarity or trans-disciplinarity. I would say that in practice, the more you tend to look hard at the disciplines, the more they tend to disappear. ...when you look closely at work taking place in an individual</p>	Identifying areas of agreement.	Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy(DT5), Pragmatism (DT4), Factual Information (TG2)	No need to discussion about interdisciplinary.  Institution departments

	<p>department I want to suggest that what you find is that people are working across a range of sub-fields, and often these sub-fields have far more in common with work taking place in other departments and disciplines than they do with the stuff going on down the corridor. What you find, in fact, is a complex web of differently related activities: to shoehorn these into disciplinary boxes is generally A. a matter of administrative convenience, or B. a function of strategic calculation, or both. But to seek to defend a notion of disciplinarity on grounds of the rigour of a (discipline specific) intellectual project, well...</p> <p>...new and exciting fields of enquiry have emerged which partake of many disciplines without belonging to any single discipline, and which have attracted their own bodies of theory, methodologies and so on - without themselves becoming disciplines. I'm thinking of fields like gender studies, heritage studies, work in the area of public culture, exciting work on Africana intellectual traditions and diasporic studies, and so on. What many of these fields share is the notion that a lot of what they do - by definition - would not be possible within the disciplines, in the sense of wanting to critique the basis of knowledge in the disciplines (from a feminist perspective, or a post-colonial perspective, or whatever). So, <i>we've been discussing the disciplines as though they are normative structures which enable new knowledge and research</i>, and even correct dead ends and wrong turns through a kind of internal logic or hidden hand. ...<i>disciplines are also structures of power that both enable and disable certain forms of knowledge, police their own boundaries, discipline and reward practitioners differently</i>. Sometimes saying something new means purposefully situating yourself outside of a given discipline - <i>beyond the pail, outside the city limits (except of course that there is no city wall, just a kind of convergence or seeping away)</i>. Interdisciplinarity is the name that we give to the ability to <i>travel, to work across bureaucratic administrative boundaries</i>, to recontextualise one's intellectual project</p>	<p>Some of the emerging fields do not belong to any disciplines</p>		
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		in relation to work happening elsewhere, then I'm all for it. In fact, I'd suspect that most of us do this most of the time anyway. I also suspect that talk about strong disciplines and whether/not interdisciplinarity is good/bad or productive/ faddish <i>is a kind of red herring</i> , the name given to a more practical and strategic set of plays around power and resources within the faculties.			
OS9	P6	<b>Re: Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research</b> – I'm not against interdisciplinarity at all, and I'm not sure that anyone else here is. It takes a long time and a lot of work to master some techniques, and the maintenance of the techniques and the training tends to be located in persisting institutions, many of which we happen to call disciplines, many of which happen to be the common names of departments in universities, etc. (Neurology, syntax, behavioral ecology, philology, whatever.) Not all academic "work" seems <i>to involve demanding techniques and skills</i> at all. I'm not arguing that nothing can be done without disciplines, or that the only way to do valuable work is within them. It's just that you need <i>biology and geology to get bio-geology off the ground</i> , or mathematics and psychology to get mathematical psychology going, or cognitive psychology and neuroscience for cognitive neuroscience, etc., etc.	Stating clarification.  Identifying areas of disagreement.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2)	Other academics fields are interdisciplinarity.
OS10	P5	<b>Re: Relationships between Disciplinary and Cross/Inter/Trans-disciplinary Research</b> – ...there is no one kind of 'good' research; <i>disciplinary and interdisciplinary, pure and applied, they all can be and are 'good' research</i> (or alternatively 'bad'). The second lesson though is that genuine knowledge advance is essentially unpredictable. It is virtually impossible to designate an area ahead of time that will be the site of future advance. So to defend any kind of research ab initio, be it disciplinary or interdisciplinary or whatever, is peculiarly self-defeating. But this doesn't help the NRF, who has to do a little forward planning. Spare a thought for online conference initiator who, although it is impossible, has to second-guess where the	Stating areas of disagreement.	Factual Information (TG2), Humour (TG3), Techno optimism (DT3), Corporatism (DT2), Neutrality (DT1).	The NRF has no direction, the idea of hosting the conference for consultation process about interdisciplinary research was impossible.

		<p>action is going to be ...to stay ahead of the game. One way would be to host <i>an online conference of this sort and to see if anything productive emerges from the interdisciplinary frisson. ...to designate a space and then to say 'be productive'</i> I find paradoxical. ...I guess I would go and look at where demonstrable advances have already been made, and at the people who have made them. Frankly, ...would pay particular attention to what the NRF rated chaps tell me, particularly the Ps - the young future high flyers (there is at least one in this conversation).</p>			
OS11	P26	<p>☒ <b>disciplinarity</b> – <i>Hi all. This posting is made in my capacity as someone - an historian - currently deep into sabbatical research time and remembering why I went into history and not something else. Also I'm feeling guilty at not posting and getting lots of emails from hardworking people trying to get me to engage. I've read the messages around inter/transdisciplinarity but I wonder if there's something missing - not an either/or but a both/and. I'm trying to think of a metaphor which explains my commitment to disciplinarity as the foundation of inter/transdisc. and all I can come up with are things about bricks and foundations, none of which sound particularly trendy and which either bring up images of the building sciences or the three little piggies. As an avowed interdisciplinarian(?) I've come to realise that this is only possible with solid disciplinary training. I've seen some stuff in the other postings about methodology - thanks P11 - but I would like to see more explicitness about the differences which make interdisc. both possible and exciting (notwithstanding the multiples sites of our construction as researchers). Most of us participating in these forums continue to be informed by our training. Not sure though, what I would like to see as the outcome of this posting? Something about interdisciplinary as part of research processes? Apologies if I've read too quickly other postings which say the same thing.</i></p>	<p>Greetings and familiar with posting of conference.</p> <p>Expressive – areas of expertise</p> <p>Seeking to reach consensus and understanding</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Uncertainty (DT5), Humour (TG3).</p>	<p>The outcome of the conference in limbo even though participants are informed through training.</p>
OS12	F1	<p>☒ <b>Training for inter/transdisciplinarity?</b> – Hi P26, You raise some</p>	<p>Expressive –</p>	<p>Corporatism (DT2),</p>	<p>New topics</p>

		interesting questions here including: Is a disciplinary training a prerequisite for involvement in inter/transdisciplinary research? How can we best learn to apply our disciplinary knowledge in inter/transdisciplinary projects? Does anyone have ideas to share here?	gratitude and acknowledging P26's contribution. Enforcing participants' contribution.	Pragmatism (DT4).	introduced for participants to contribute.
OS13	P6	<p>☐ <b>Re: Training for inter/transdisciplinarity?</b> – I agree with P26. Except under quite specific epistemological conditions, science (I use the term fairly broadly) is advanced by the application of sophisticated techniques requiring prolonged training. "Disciplines" is just a plural noun for the institutional settings that maintain and refine the techniques and provide the training. Doing non-vacuous interdisciplinary work should require being properly competent in the techniques of multiple fields. It should be a lot more difficult in some respects than disciplinary work to do properly (there are some trade-offs; those who do ID work are not super-human). Too often it seems to be an excuse to produce superficial nonsense that is allowed to flourish because each discipline mostly ignores it as not "their" problem. Without the sophisticated training that is provided by prolonged exposure to established disciplines, one's chances of doing worthwhile research are severely and avoidably limited.</p>	Identifying areas of agreement with P26's contribution	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4).	A call for sophisticated training and avoid the support of superficial nonsense type of research.
OS14	P11	<p>☐ <b>Re: Training for inter/transdisciplinarity?</b> – Hi P6. <i>Actually, I think that we are in substantial agreement on this point.</i> Certainly, the notion of disciplinary work involving a long and hard apprenticeship and training is one that I would agree with. <i>We've all seen the difficult process of acquisition that our postgraduate students go through, learning the rules of the game, learning to write in certain accepted registers, learning who to read and cite. Much of this is necessary and good - the kind of "discipline" that makes real, thoughtful, innovative scholarship possible (which is what we're all talking about here).</i> But I want to add one more thought to this. And that is that - in many instances - there is nothing natural or neutral about the rules of the</p>	Acknowledging P26's contribution.	Corporatism (DT2), Factual Information (TG2).	Disciplinary practices and guiding ideas are useful for postgraduate training.

	<p>game, when it comes to disciplinary practices and guiding ideas. In many cases, certainly in the case of a discipline like archaeology, they have been formed in conversation with prevailing social contexts and conditions. This is a complex relation - not simply a contingent relation, which is why I have used the clumsy formulation "in conversation with" - but it seems to me that it is demonstrably the case. And, again in relation to archaeology, the legacies of these tangled histories (first under colonialism, later under apartheid) weigh heavily on the discipline, actively disenable certain kind of engagement, the asking of certain kinds of questions.</p> <p>In such a case, it may be necessary actively to break the rules rather than simply to follow them. Furthermore, to the extent that disciplinary discourses discourage the breaking of rules, it may be that working in an interdisciplinary way, in a context where there are other people working on similar projects in different disciplines, may free one up to be adventurous, to find the questions you need to break open structures of thought and practice, to *break boundaries*.</p> <p>And I don't think such work is condemned to being vapid, far from it. A final thought in this direction: I've been re-reading <i>Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto</i> as preparation to teaching it to a class on Public Culture. You'll know the essay, a fabulously over-the-top piece of provocation and the ultimate boundary breaker (in terms of wanting to dissolve a whole series of binaries: human/ animal, human/machine, organinc/inorganic etc. etc.) In the opening paragraph she says that her method of proceeding (she calls it her methodology) will be based on notions of "irony" and "blasphemy". And - here's the point - she reminds us that blasphemy is not the same as apostacy. The great blasphemers, the ones who really get under the skin, are the ones who know the canonical texts best. They can match you quote for quote, they walk the walk and talk the talk. This is how I like to think of interdisciplinary work, a kind of blasphemous zone for the pursuit of disciplined undisciplined scholarship. A space</p>	<p>Referencing and sharing Donna Haraway's article.</p>		<p>Breaking of boundaries is needed.</p>
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		<p>to be free of disciplinary strictures, or - better still - to be both free and unfree. To step in and out of them. I think of how empowering it can be to show a student how disciplinary knowledge is constructed, but then to show how useful the structures can be.</p> <p>A final thought on breaking the rules. I'd say that present circumstances invite rule breaking, to the extent that the Humanities and Social Sciences are in a period of transition in which we rethink the relation between scholarship and society. In fact, I'd go further - and I'd be interested in reactions to this - I'd say that they require it.</p>			
OS15	P4	<p>☒ <b>shifting boundaries on sport, leisure and tourism</b> – A lot of the discussion on the site is very philosophical and I would like to submit a practical example: Having done a <i>doctorate on sport marketing and being an active traveller inside South Africa</i> I used to regard sport tourism as the ultimate fit between sport and tourism. Research in these two fields, is in my view, very fragmented and I have encountered pockets of excellence at different institutions.</p> <p>In 2004 I submitted an application to the NRF-for funding for a project on measuring customer experiences at tourism destinations. The response: "This is not academic research".</p> <p>Although one's pride gets a bit dented by such a response I am still focussed on making a contribution in shifting the boundaries of research on leisure marketing - the first ever text on this topic has been published in the UK in 2005. Leisure can be divided into different sectors: visitor attractions, accommodation, tourist destinations, tour operators, transport, resort complexes, retail travel, arts and entertainment, recreation and sport, leisure shopping, and restaurants and catering. Underlying research areas, such as adventure tourism and non-commercial leisure sport and recreation, are waiting to be uncovered. Management scientists, psychologists, sociologists and experts in human movement could do collaborative research on the "experience" generated through activities such as mountaineering, shark cave diving, white water rafting, birding,</p>	Expressive areas of expertise.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	<p>The NRF refused research proposal for funding because project was not academic research.</p> <p>The NRF needs to constitute what an academic research is.</p>

		<p>caravanning etc. etc.                  And hey - religious institutions should take note of the sectors mentioned above. As people discover and explore different forms of leisure, participation in such activities will compete with church attendance. May I then suggest that church leaders need to understand that their biggest competition stems from changing leisure behaviour and not necessarily that people are becoming less religious. Lastly a parting shot at the NRF: <i>May I suggest a rethink on what constitutes "academic research"</i>.</p>			
OS16	P5	<p> <b>Re: shifting boundaries on sport, leisure and tourism</b> – <i>Lets go along with you, P4.</i> A key question now arises: what kind of research do you want to do? By saying 'interdisciplinary' <i>I don't get a picture of what the research question might be. Do you want to tap into the 'experiences' of sport tourists? I would say that this would be social research, and one would have to be skilled in social research methodology to do it well. Is this your field?</i> If not, perhaps you want to interest social scientists in sport tourism. In which case, what's the question that would prick their interest? Does sport tourism build forms of sociality/social solidarity that other tourisms don't? Or, does it give a stronger sense of self than other tourisms, a question the psychologists might be interested in? Without these suppositions, though, you may find it hard to hook these people into your project.</p>	<p>Identifying areas of agreement</p> <p>Seeking clarification and to reach understanding</p>	<p>Uncertainty (TG5),                  Confidence (TG1),                  Corporatism (DT2),                  Pragmatism (DT4).</p>	<p>P4 needs to clarify issues raised.</p>
OS17	P4	<p> <b>RE: shifting boundaries on sport, leisure and tourism</b> – <i>Thanks P5,</i> You have asked valid questions which need some thought.</p>	<p>Acknowledging P11's contribution</p>	<p>Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Appreciating information given.</p>
OS18	P11	<p> <b>Re: shifting boundaries on sport, leisure and tourism</b> – <i>WISER are running a colloquim on football ahead of South Africa hosting the World Cup.</i> You should check out the programme if you haven't already, it includes trainers, managers, players etc. as well as a range of "academic" commentators. May be useful in opening up the kind of academic space you're looking for.</p>		<p>Factual Information (TG2),                  Corporatism (DT2),                  Confidence (TG1).</p>	<p>Useful and helpful information for P4.</p>
OS19	P4	<p> <b>RE: shifting boundaries on sport, leisure and tourism</b> – <i>Thanks P11</i></p>	<p>Acknowledging P11's contribution</p>	<p>Neutrality (DT1),                  Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Appreciating information.</p>

## Consolidating (Appendix C continues)

Ref	Text	Description (Text Analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive Type)	Explanation (Social Practice)
CS1	<p><b>Re: Message from Online Conference Initiators</b> – I'm now <i>less confident than ever</i> that I know what is supposed to be going on, or whether my (sort of) research work belongs anywhere near it. It is, no doubt, true that just about any string of tokens in a non-formal language "can be interpreted in many ways". Since this goes for "boundary shifting" it also goes for any question about boundary shifting, including the most recent ones regarding whether anyone expects some of that to be going on in their future work. Independent of some agreement as to what, for the purposes of this exercise, we mean by 'boundary shifting', though, its going to be hard to say whether anyone's pronouncements on how likely they think it will be in their own research in fact mean anything at all. (Of course, if something is thought to be a policy good, then everyone will claim to do it all the time, no matter what they are in fact doing. Thus all manner of unchanged curricula now have "outcomes" if you ask. So perhaps <i>we can expect everyone to *say* that they're shifting boundaries, and to become highly practiced at justifying their claim, just as people become practised at OBE-talk.</i>)</p> <p>Perhaps, though, the problem is with me. I say this because it seems to me, that some people are much more confident at talking about these questions topics, and it also seems more and more as though this debate is framed in, and intended for pursuit in, a style of talking and thinking (a 'discourse' I suppose) that I find <i>alien</i> and mysterious. I truly have no idea what it means to say "<i>shifting boundaries are both an objective structural condition and an objective of agency</i>". I know various ways of making sense of all of the individual words, and I specialise in the topic of agency in some of my work in cognitive and behavioural science, but I just can't say what the words mean in that arrangement. I certainly <i>can't help 'consolidate' a discussion I don't understand</i>, and</p>	<p>A reply to the message from online conference initiators.</p> <p>Seeking to reach an understanding</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2). Pragmatism (DT4), Legitimacy (DT5), Uncertainty (TG5),</p> <p>Techno optimism (DT3). Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Comments to the message from the online conference initiators.</p> <p>Still in doubt about the purpose of the conference.</p> <p>Academics interprets boundary shifting differently.</p> <p>Participant will read other participants' contributions in order to make a sense of what is happening.</p>

		the process of consolidation won't get advanced by my public bewilderment. I'm coming to think, though, that there is a boundary around the SSLH in South Africa, and that I am on the outside of it. That could, of course, be part of what an exercise of this sort discovers or decides: that some people just aren't "with the programme", or part of the vision. I'll <i>try to lurk and watch</i> , and see if there is anything I can <i>make enough sense of to be able to reply to</i> .			
CS2	F1	<b>Ways to engage</b> – Hi P6, thanks for this message. I think that its important that this <i>consultation process includes varied opportunities for critical engagement</i> and for informing and shaping an emergent vision of SSLH research. Online conference initiators have stated several contentions concerning the changing environment of SSLH research. It might be interesting to see where this conversation goes if we can temporarily treat these as working assumptions	Seeking clarification	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2).	Participants must use the contentions in the message temporarily as a basis for discussion.
CS3	P9	<b>Re: Message from Online Conference Initiators</b> – Sorry to have missed much of the discussion recently. However, I must try and chip in at the end of the consolidation phase to reiterate some of the points I made in the initial 'thought papers'. Much of what I have to say pertains to the humanities rather than the SSLH research community (which, very politely, I must decline to believe in other than as an administrative fiction): 1. I think we need to scrutinise very carefully the manner in which we participate in the supposedly 'global' research community. (This is much less of an issue, I believe, for the natural scientists.) All too often, humanities research emanating from South Africa can be construed as a peripheral adjunct to the 'global' (i.e. US and European) research output. We behave as a research fringe trying to make a (deferential?) impact within a largely western imperial academic project. Instead, I believe we ought to rely much more on exploring South African research data, begin to challenge on both empirical and theoretical grounds the paradigms that have travelled to this geographical area, and work much harder at conveying the results of our investigations to the South African public. 2. I think we need to strategise much more thoroughly the manner in which	Possible suggestions on ways to improve South African research community.  Quoting Ian Willison's Phrase.  Command (use of "We must")  Seeking to reach consensus.	Factual Information (TG2), Pragmatism (DT4), Corporatism (DT2).	Apologising for not contributing.  Examine the way research is done globally.  SSLH research community needs to concentrate more exploring on South African research data.

		<p>our learned societies interact with civil society.</p> <p>3. I think there is a need for the creation of cross-institutional research groupings with a South African focus in the humanities, in order to create a critical mass of cognate research in specified areas.</p> <p>4. I think we need to pay much more attention to South-South cooperation than we do; and to develop strong African linkages, and linkages to Eastern territories.</p> <p>5. At the same time, we must also take care not to run down our frail research base in the European and American humanities even further than is already the case, because that way lies abject submission to metropolitan research authority: we will revert to the status of colonial 'transmission' universities.</p> <p>6. Our aim should be to create in South Africa centres of research excellence as part of a poly-centric global cosmopolis (the phrase is Ian Willison's) rather than continuing as (typically) solitary scholars operating on the periphery of the life-worlds of others. (And in case the above is taken as theory or 'wishful thinking', I should add that with colleagues' support, I have taken small steps in each of these directions</p>			
CS4	F1	<p><b>What are we doing?</b> – What is the SSLH research community doing to respond to these contentions? (<i>Please try to answer this question from your experience and observations of SSLH research projects within and across disciplines.</i>)</p>	Direct imperative - introducing a new topic for discussion	Legitimacy (DT5), Corporatism (DT2).	Participants' contributions needed for the new topic.
CS5	P6	<p><b>Re: What are we doing?</b> – I'm starting to feel like the <i>house pedant</i>, but surely it isn't the *contentions* researchers respond to at all, but rather that in virtue of which they're true (if they are true - and I'm not sure they are in all cases).</p> <p>Anyway, maybe autobiography has a place here. So suppose that it is true that "the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup>Century presents [sic] all knowledge fields with research opportunities and constraints that require considered reflection and strategic repositioning." What do I do, then? Is it too obvious to say that I try to keep an eye on what the cutting edge is no matter where the work is being done, an eye on the opportunities and resource problems here, and an</p>	Seeking to reach understanding	Humour (TG3), Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Persuasion (TG4).	Academics needs to be aware of what other academics' research is about. Participant's intentions for SSLH research community in South Africa to connect with

		<p>eye (<i>yes, I have more than two</i>) on the local scene, and as far as I can try to take account of what they all see as I plan my research?</p> <p>In more detail, I'm trying to help develop a community of researchers in cognitive and behavioural science spanning several disciplines and that is properly connected with the international community of researchers in these areas. I'm hoping that we'll be able to attract significant external funding in time, and we're actively engaged in putting together grant proposals with people in other countries.</p> <p>It could be said that my observation (not only mine) that SA is scandalously behind the pace in cognitive science is the fruit of considered reflection. And I suppose that trying to fix that amounts to "strategic repositioning".</p> <p>My experience is that this is a difficult process. Possible collaborators are under pressure to show the fruits of short term "productivity" and the start-up costs (in time alone) of collaboration can seem like a dangerous risk. The central government processes for approving (or, mostly, not) curricular innovations are very demoralising to try to deal with, and present a massive dis-incentive to innovation in higher degrees. And the mechanisms of budget devolution and reporting of teaching productivity within institutions are a further obstacle to co-operative graduate programmes.</p> <p>All the brave talk about crossing and moving boundaries means all too little when one hits the arrestor-bed of a network of policy and institutional arrangements that favour stagnation and foster a 'competing small business' mentality. I don't know how relevant my experience is to the big picture, though. I know only of a small number of projects, and my opinion about the state of play in SSLH in SA generally would be based on too scant an acquaintance with the facts to be of any value.</p>	Elaborating of project currently involve in		<p>similar international research community, so that SSLH can catch up.</p> <p>Collaborators available but these initiatives lacks funding and time.</p> <p>The available funding is only for small projects.</p>
CS6	F1	<p><b>Our Underlying Strengths?</b> – What are the underlying strengths of the SSLH research community's responsiveness? (<i>Please try to answer this question from your experience and observations of SSLH research projects within and across disciplines.</i>)</p>	Direct imperative - introducing a new topic for discussion	Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants' contributions needed for the new topic.
CS7	P17	<p><b>Re: Our Underlying Strengths?</b> – The <i>SSLH research community conducts and produces research that are valuable</i> in as far as it can</p>	Expressing SSLH community	Factual Information (TG2),	Valuable SSLH research is not

		contribute to development, which is the core focus of government in that a large part of SSLH research is focused at improving the wuality of life. Unfortunately there appears to be no coordinated effort to disseminate the results of research beyond getting it published in journals.	problems.	Corporatism (DT2).	being published due to lack of funds. No coordination to have the results published.
CS8	F1	<b>Improving our Response?</b> – What are the underlying weaknesses of the SSLH research community’s responsiveness? ( <i>Please try to answer this question from your experience and observations of SSLH research projects within and across disciplines.</i> )	Direct imperative - introducing a new topic for discussion	Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants’ contributions needed for the new topic.
CS9	F1	<b>Re: Improving our Response?</b> – How might the SSLH research community better respond to contemporary imperatives? ( <i>Please try to answer this question from your experience and observations of SSLH research projects within and across disciplines.</i> )	Direct imperative - introducing a new topic for discussion	Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants’ contributions needed for the new topic.
CS10	P17	<b>Re: Improving our Response?</b> – One of the contemporary imperatives for the SSLH research community is to be found in a statement by the erstwhile premier of the A, X, when he said at the opening of the legislature that the province is often criticised for its lack of delivery, but that within its boudaries there were <i>7 tertiary institutions and that they do not contribute towards improving government.</i> Coordinated mechanisms need to be established to ensure that research informs policy <i>BEFORE</i> those policies are implemented. Research that examines the types of legal (or other) problems that people experience is rarely considered. Schemes are designed from the " <i>top-down</i> " without drawing on existing research. Government schemes aimed at improving quality of life and at giving effect to rights should also be shaped in part by " <i>bottom-up</i> " research that informs administrators and planners.	Poor policy implemented because of no coordination mechanisms.  Research approaches followed.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT5), Pragmatism (DT4).	No coordination between academics and policy makers.  A call for coordination in implement policies. Change of research type from top-down to bottom-up.
CS11	P20	<b>Re: Improving our Response?</b> – P17's point is of course very valid. And, if <i>memory serves me correctly</i> , Z University has one of the best Schools of Business in the world, but the University itself is surrounded on 3 sides by <i>slums</i> . Hmmm.	Agreeing to P17’s contribution. Drawing in participants and prompting discussions.	Humour (TG3), Corporatism (DT2).	One of the best business schools is located in the poorest area of the town

CS12	F1	<b>Systemic and Structural Changes?</b> – What systemic and structural changes are needed beyond changes within and between the SSLH knowledge domains?( <i>Please try to answer this question from your experience and observations of SSLH research projects within and across disciplines.</i> )	Direct imperative - introducing a new topic for discussion	Corporatism (DT2), Legitimacy (DT5).	Participants' contributions needed for the new topic.
CS13	P6	<b>Systemic and Structural Changes?</b> – I've pointed at some of this in a posting elsewhere in the consolidating forum. Briefly, here, there are, I think, <i>serious obstacles in the way of research innovation</i> among them (a) institutional design issues internal to many universities (all I know about - they could be elsewhere) that make faculties and entities within them act like competing small businesses, and (b) <i>barriers to recognition of new degree programmes</i> . There should be positive incentives that offset these costs, and pressure at various levels to deal with the institutional problems.	Repeating contribution.	Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2)	Serious barriers to research innovation. Institutions facing difficulties recognising new degree programmes.
CS14	P17	<b>Re: Systemic and Structural Changes?</b> – Research institutions such as universities should create fora between the knowledge domains, both internally and externally (e.g. other universities, government, industry) through which the value and applicability of SSLH research could be stimulated, coordinated and promoted. Personally, I find that I have to search for possible collaborators on projects.	Possible solutions to SSLH research community	Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	A call for fora to promote, stipulate and coordinate SSLH research between knowledge domains.
CS15	P6	<b>Re: Systemic and Structural Changes?</b> – P17 makes, I think, a common and correct lament. These days getting to know colleagues in other areas and sharing ideas is not itself regarded as "work". The problem is, if there aren't acceptable ways of having those preliminary conversations, the chances of more goal-directed collaborative "research" as narrowly understood taking shape are reduced. I do not think, though, that this is specifically a problem about cross-disciplinary collaboration. It applies within disciplines, and in fact at all scales. I also do not think that fora need to be created, so much as <i>the fanaticism for short term productivity needs to be reduced</i> , so that the opportunity costs of Collaboration seem to be worth paying. Or, perhaps, if fora are created, it needs to be with a clear sense that exploration is itself regarded as valuable.	Identifying areas of agreements.  Elaborating possible solutions.	Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4), Factual Information (TG2).	Purposes of creating a fora for short term productivity to be cut down.
CS16	P19	<b>Limits of engagement</b> – First just an <i>expression of frustration</i> . This is my	Frustration	Factual information	Conference

	<p>third effort at writing what follows. <i>The last two time I lost the messages when I went to preview.</i> I am actually writing in response to P6's comments. I too am not sure what direction this conference is going. I think I understand the Delphi method and the need to keep conversation in order to see where conversations go and where we can find synthesis, agreement, etc. But having said this I have have a major concern.</p> <p>I experience that we are often talking past one another and I also sense that this is because we operate in two fundamentally <i>different ontological and epistimological positions</i>. One position is indicated by a greater influence of materialism, realism, empiricism and positivism. The second position is more influenced by idealism and nominalism. But these are not simply positions. The assumptions upon which they are grounded place then in direct oposition to one another as a basis for research. But we really have not discussed this issue. We have talked around it but have not directly addressed the implications. How are we to engage in <i>cross/multi/transdisciplinary</i> research when the <i>most fundamental questions of this type of research are not being addressed</i>.</p> <p>At the most basic level is an issue of whether knowledge is discovered or created. Thus the nature of questions such as how the SSLH research community can respond to changes in the nature of knowledge. <i>What SSLH community?</i> When was this community discovered/ created? I am sure that there is great opportunity for joint research, at a minimum at the boundaries of disciplines. But on the question of fundamental ontological and epistimological differences I wonder as to any real opportunity for joint/shared research. For example, the observation that there are changes in the nature of knowledge.</p> <p>What is this change? When did this change occur? For whom did it change? Does this mean, when did knowledge become relative? When did the "nature" of knowledge become the celebration of equivalent knowledges, none privileged over another? When did science change in that there is no longer a world "out there" to be known?</p> <p>The assumptions of the scientific method have not appreciably changed. Our</p>	<p>Seeking to reach consensus /understanding.</p> <p>Basis of research.</p> <p>Assumptions of scientific method</p>	<p>(TG2), Uncertainty (TG5), Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>direction not known to participant, purpose of the Delphi technique not being used.</p> <p>Background information of SSLH community needed.</p> <p>Collaboration of disciplines not possible due to different research methods followed.</p>
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		<p>confidence that the method can provide us with a knowledge upon which we can ethically act can be brought into question. But upon what basis are we to justify intervention? To try and alleviate the causes and consequences of poverty, of social inequality, to create just societies? For the social "scientist" the nature of knowledge has not been fundamentally altered. It is still grounded in the philosophical positions of realism, empiricism and positivism. And these positions will remain in opposition to positions grounded in the positions of idealism and nominalism. To the extent that there are fundamental differences among researchers on these grounds it is difficult for me to see who are members of "the" <i>SSLH research community</i>. I am not intending my observations to be pessimistic but I do believe that if we are not willing to engage the implications of the fundamental differences described above that the likelihood of fruitful collaborative research, especially across the humanities and the social sciences is greatly limited, especially with social scientists who believe in the promise of science.</p>			
CS17	F1	<p><b>Re: Limits of engagement</b> – P19, Thanks for this message which asks several important questions with significant implications for the notion of "the SSLH research community" e.g.                  If 1) We lack a common language to discuss scientific progress in SSLH and 2) We also lack shared assumptions about how we know the world and consequently about the nature of science,                  Then                  1) There may be several different communities within SSLH research (with different conceptual languages and different assumptions about the nature of science) 2) Members of different communities are likely to talk past each other (even within the same discipline?) 3) Research collaboration across communities may be difficult To all: Does P19's message strike a chord for you? How do you understand the notion of "the SSLH research community"?</p>	<p>Acknowledging P19's contributions</p> <p>Identifying areas of disagreements and agreements.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2)                  Corporatism (DT2).                  Pragmatism (DT4),                  Legitimacy (DT5).</p>	<p>Important implications for the notion of the SSLH community and a suggestion of possible solutions</p>

<p>CS18</p>	<p>P21</p>	<p><b>Re: Limits of engagement</b> – Thanks for the question, F1. I’ve been reading the posts thus far and apologise for joining the conference so late (Life got in the way). I have found the discussion enormously stimulating. But much of the stuff seemed to be a case of people talking past each other because they are coming from fundamentally different understandings of knowledge, or “two fundamentally different ontological and epistemological positions” as P16 puts it. I’m nervous of quoting anyone in this auspicious gathering of academics, but much of the debate seemed to be as Carspecken (1996: 1) describes:          "These days, trying to learn about social research is rather like walking into a room of noisy people. The room is full of cliques, each displaying a distinctive jargon and cultural style. There is, of course, a large group talking quantitative research much as it has been talked for decades. But there are new, flashy groups heatedly discussing ‘constructivist’, ‘postmodern’, ‘postpositivist’, and ‘critical’ research. Most of these people are talking about qualitative social research, but they disagree with each other on such basic issues as the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, and the concept of truth. You cannot get more basic than that!" From the perspective of advancing research in SSLH in a Technikon (read University of X), a number of issues raised have been particularly pertinent. But they can take on a specific slant that may not be as pertinent in the ‘traditional’ University sector and thus raise questions about who the SSLH research community is/should be. If you will bear with me, let me present three simple (and genuine) scenarios.          Scenario One: A B.Tech (Honours) lecturer is approached to discuss the inclusion of a Research Methods course in the curriculum, he responds by saying: “My students don’t really need to do research. They are interested in ideas and designs and how people respond to these. They are interested in people’s views. They aren’t interested in hypotheses and statistics.” As much as this conference has been trying to knock out a shared vision of SSLH research, we need to bear in mind the need for general research development among (University of Technology) academics, so that they can</p>	<p>Acknowledgment towards F1</p> <p>Identifying areas of agreements.</p> <p>Quoting Carspecken (1996).</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2).          Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Acknowledging for being given the opportunity to contribute</p> <p>Scenario 1- perception that only one good research method (qualitative),          2. No need for student to do research.          3. A call to recognise artefacts</p>
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		<p>become aware that there are research paradigms beyond positivism.</p> <p>Scenario Two: A lecturer at a University of Y is asked about the historically dismal research output from Technikons and from the Arts generally. She responds by saying: “Well, that’s because we make works of art and these aren’t given research funding and aren’t recognized as research output.” She is asked: “Do you apply for research funding and explain the research that underpins the design and construction? Do you document the work of art and its research in an attempt to get it recognized?” She doesn’t answer. This conference has raised questions about how to recognise artefacts as research outputs (and whether we should do so). If the artefact arises out of a rigorous investigation, is it research? But what if the artist/researcher does not have the SSLH discourse to document the process?</p> <p>Scenario Three: A lecturer in a University of Y bemoans the (perceived) ease with which traditional Universities can accrue research output. “They have students doing research and they can co-publish with them.” “Can’t you do the same thing with your senior students?” she is asked. “No,” she replies, “Our students are learning technical things like how to do a job, which buttons to press, how to fix something. They don’t do critical awareness and reflect on a process and write about it.” Oy vey! Perhaps we need to develop a shared understanding of what University means before we can develop a shared understanding of SSLH research? I think these scenarios contextualise the issues that may have to be addressed if SSLH research is to be developed across the Higher Education sector. Thanks</p>	<p>Narrating scenario related to research issues.</p> <p>Seeking clarification other participants</p>		<p>and substation of artefacts development.</p> <p>Merging of technical colleges to form universities</p>
CS19	P20	<p><b>Re: Limits of engagement</b> – Hi P21, In my view your contribution here opens profound problems and areas of concern in the so-called Universities (or institutes) of Technology. I operate in one myself, so perhaps it might be useful to engage with some of the questions you have raised. I have done so in another part of the conference on my own "job", so I shall move from another perspective here. I shall also be reasonably short (in as much as researchers and artists can be short given a forum!).</p> <p>Let me start with your last point first, namely that we should engage with the concept of a University. For what it is worth, my institution only</p>	<p>Acknowledging P21’s contributions.</p> <p>The transition</p>	<p>Humour (TG3), Factual Information (TG2), Technocracy (DT6).</p>	<p>Researchers/Academics usually talk a lot and take up time.</p>

	<p>managed to <i>formulate a concept of the difference between a University and a University of Technology some 8 months after the merger and the renaming!</i> The die has been cast. I don't like what they have come up with, but there it is. It is true (as you have noted very clearly) that the move from Tech to UT is going to be a long and arduous process, and will involve a massive "paradigm shift" (tentatively stated, given the early debate in this conference on what a paradigm might be!) What our UT has decided is that our research work should predominantly be "research in and through application." <i>Hmmm</i>. I suspect this is an attempt to "merge" "hands on experience" with "traditional thinking." Again <i>Hmmm</i>. From an educational perspective this does however allow us to engage with different philosophies and practices -- the work of Gardner springs to mind, as well as OBE, Wholebrain learning and so on.</p> <p>Perhaps this conference has opened up for me the problems, as P16 has pointed out (and you have referred to) the ontological and epistemological problems, and this asked me to go back and <i>have a look at Mouton's work on World One (Everyday life, pragmatic concerns and particular problem solving), World Two ("Science" and generalising research results, in a short hand way of speaking) and World Three (Meta-science, the ontological and so-called "paradigm shifts).</i> In a gross simplification, it seems to me that this conference was desparately looking for ways of engaging at World One level (and indeed some of the contributions were aimed at this -- sport and recreation, environmental issues and the like) but we all ended up debating the possibilities of "co-habiting" at World Two or even World three Levels. And it seems to me that it is right to do this too. This layout of mine may not have been of help to you, except perhaps to say that UTs have, by way of their histories, been "stranded" in World one and it is going to take some time to move out of there. By way of an experiment, it might be worth your while to ask some of your students about the sources of some of the ideas or techniques that they work with -- whose idea was it originally, sort of thing. Perhaps it might be more worthwhile to engage with some of your scenarios (Interesting the use of the word coming from Theatre -- I have spoken</p>	<p>from Technical colleges to universities and its complications that come with it.</p> <p>Combining formal and informal discourse.</p> <p>Demonstration of awareness of literature.</p> <p>Referencing to P16's contribution.</p>		<p>A call to address the ontological and epistemological problems</p> <p>A call to have a criteria that substantiate artists' works.</p>
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	<p>elsewhere about the theatricalisation advantages, as well as metaphorisation).</p> <p><b>Scenario 1:</b> You raise two issues here -- the perception that research can only be effective if it is positivist (indeed using quantitative methods) and why should UT students do research. For what it is worth, the latter can be addressed by suggesting that the processes and procedures (the thinking) for doing research are almost identical to preparing a pitch or a presentation or a tender or so on. Indeed <i>Research methods then allows one to kill two birds with one stone</i> (if this unPC metaphor might be accepted!). The former issue is a long hard battle -- believe me! Techs were dominated by the SET group (and this included extensive laboratories) and for the SSLH to make inroads is extremely difficult. But perseverance is all, as well as gentle nudges and assistance from the NRF and similar organisations. It is also far more timeconsuming doing research in the SSLH category, and have you looked at teaching pedagogies at UTs just lately!</p> <p><b>Scenario 2:</b> this raises two issues: the recognition of artefacts, and the substantiation of artefact development. ("Oy Vey" I think you quoted!). What follows is highly personalised, so please forgive me. In the former case you might find that the NRF and the DoE have spent some time trying desparately to do this -- to recognise arefacts as research equivalents. There have been a large number of conferences around this issue. The bottom line is that the arts community (and I include the design community) cannot reach any consensus on criteria for the awarding of the recognition. Part of that problem is tackled in the latter problem -- do the artists have the theoretical and writing skills (for want of a better word) to substantiate what they are doing, and more particularly then to develop an argument that might be acceptable to the broader scholarly community as to the validity of their criteria (in as much as criteria for artistic excellence can be valid at any one time -- see what I mean!). I believe it can and must develop the criteria. But it is going to take a massive paradigm shift. By way of example, you might want to ask one of your academic artist scholars what the criteria are that they use to justify the marks for undergraduate work and then ask that</p>	<p>References to earlier posting</p> <p>Use of metaphor</p> <p>Expressive statements.</p> <p>Identifying areas of disagreements.</p> <p>Quoting Dennis Davis.</p>		
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		<p>scholar whether similar criteria can be used for the "great" artists and you will see what I mean. If you get the answer "No, because in the latter case we all know when we are in the presence of genius" sort of reply, then you will realise where the problem lies.</p> <p>Should Artists have to substantiate their work to get research output, in other words, should artists "master" two different media or "thought-processes?" As Dennis Davis used to say "You be the judge!" Provocatively, this might be what Universities demand. Also provocatively artists are one of the few "professions" that would end up "talking about what they themselves make".</p> <p><b>Scenario 3:</b> I have chatted somewhat about this above. I don't know what the government actually intended with the mergers and what went with them. It may be that UTs will simply end up as Technikons with other names. In this case, pushing buttons is what happened and what will happen. Personally I think that we should "seize the day" and place thinking skills and experiential skills next to each other. <i>I hope that this has muddied the waters sufficiently!</i> I would like to encourage you to make contact so that we can compare notes and ideas, but let us do this "offline" so to speak. For the other readers, I hope this have been of some interest. Cheers</p>			
CS20	P6	<p><b>Re: Limits of engagement</b> – I most definitely do not think that there is an SSLH community at all. There's a patchwork of disciplines and shared problems and methods, and some overlap in our students, but no real community at all. Anyone who doubts this might want to look at the pile of higher degree proposals at a meeting of a higher degree committee of a single faculty containing both humanities and social science, and bear in mind that doing so leaves out Law, and may well leave out geography, town planning, and various other "non-natural science" types.</p> <p>Indeed that's what we are, "non-natural sciences", with no more chance of being a community than other negatively defined groups like "people who haven't seen 'The Sound of Music'". And the "non-natural sciences" way of thinking of us is, to my mind, no more than a counter-productive nineteenth century hangover. We're proud of the progress we've made throwing off</p>	<p>Negative expressive</p> <p>Identifying areas of disagreements.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Non-natural science excluded at meetings of higher degree committee.</p>

		<p>C19 racist nonsense - why not go the whole hog and abandon some of their ridiculous pseudo-romantic epistemology too?          Of course, I'm overstating it (a bit). (It's very late.) And I do understand some of the things that linguists and anthropologists and political scientists worry about, and some of them know about some of the things that worry me, etc.          But absent of some very last-century view that some single body of theory (dialectical materialism or something) holds us all together and gives us a way of talking and a single mission, I don't see that we should expect to be a community, even if institutional convenience has us feeding from the same troughs. I think that the sciences could be rather more like a community, but my (I know marginal and contentious) view is that getting there depends largely on dropping the thought that there's a deep divide between the natural and social sciences at all.</p>			
CS21	P11	<p><b>Re: Limits of engagement</b> – P19 has hit the issue on the head in terms of the deep epistemological and ontological divide that separates the different positions in this conversation/ near-conversation, although I would have some quibbles about his characterisation of the two camps (positivist, empiricist, materialist etc versus nominalist, relativist etc). Another way of characterising this split might be to say more functionalist, instrumentalist type approaches versus more critical and reflexive type approaches (which need not be relativist etc.) Some thoughts on this general divide: First, the observation that it is deeply entrenched even (especially?) within disciplines. Thus, archaeology (for example) is cleanly divided between positivists ("processualists") and anti- or post-positivists ("postprocessualists"), so much so that there is little exchange between the two camps. You choose your journals/ conferences/ sessions according to your stripe.          A second comment would be in terms of the relative weakness of a critical/ reflexive approach in South African academia specifically. See, for example, A and B's harsh critique of urban studies (in a recent issue of Public Culture focussed on Jo'burg). In my experience the kind of institutional spaces which encourage a critical approach to the production of</p>	<p>Positive expressive towards P19's contributions.</p> <p>Identifying areas of disagreements.</p>	<p>Factual Information (TG2), Corporatism (DT2).</p>	<p>Academics need to publish their work in other discipline's journals.</p> <p>the different approaches to research needs do work in collaboration.</p>

		<p>disciplinary knowledges are tenuous, threatened, and few and far between. We're not talking about a (near) conversation between equals...</p> <p>A third comment would be that both approaches need one another. Thirty years of empiricist, positivist archaeology have shown how "thin" the kinds of interpretations are that you end up with, when you rigorously exclude notions of history and society. Equally, much of the ungrounded, theoretically-based work that came out as part of the first wave of postprocessual archaeologies now seems - well - unsubstantial, "thin".</p> <p>If we need one another, then it seems that we should find ways to talk to (rather than past) one another. A thought in this regard: I would say that often this talking past is more seeming than real, strategic rather than essential. I suspect that the area of common ground is larger than we admit, that, in fact, the empiricists are more reflexive and the relativists more truth- and problem-orientated than appearances suggest. It's the nature of academic debate that encourages us to take and argue for hard, opposed positions, to represent ourselves through binaries, and so on. For me it's more a strategic, discursive question about why we don't want to speak "to", why we (pretend to) speak past, why we express differences in terms of trenches, deep divides etc.</p> <p>To finish with a thought on this conference, then, I wonder whether this isn't precisely the divide that we should be challenging, exploring, the boundary that we should be shifting or transgressing. A lot of discussion has been around demonstrating the absolute nature of this divide. I'm not so convinced...</p>			
CS22	P23	<p><b>Consolidation</b> – Hope this is the right place to say this. It has been interesting to read through the "shifting boundaries debate". I am not sure we have made progress towards that goal. This issue to me is that we are trying hard to find the theoretical framework, prior to thinking what this means in terms of research practice and what that in turn means for the world out there. AND yes - it is important that we start thinking about the people out there and less whether or not it (the research) will get us an A-C/P rating, or will fit into the "International journal of..." And yes - thinking</p>	Expressive of ideas	Corporatism (DT2), Factual Information (TG2).	<p>Wrong conference intentions (trying to build a theoretical framework.</p> <p>A call for social</p>

	<p>about how I do the research sometimes opens up ideas about what theory will be used...and often the topic changes because of that "practical" rather than "theoretical" musings. The argument/statements in the forum, to me, is not breaking new ground. Perhaps it is easier to think through what SSHL can give society that links directly to what the physical/ natural sciences are doing and could help (perhaps direct) government policy, etc. - in this way being strategic and policy (changed) focused.</p> <p>As example of what we can do that can direct what the natural sciences do/ must/can do is to develop an over-arching project that include large numbers of researchers. Something all the people in this forum can contribute towards is the land (re)distribution issues. Lets start with the policy claims. They are about social justice. OK so what can we say about it. We can say that it is generally theoretically not possible to inform normative justice claims through empirical research (although there are a few theories around). Yet is that so. Let's take Rawls and Nozick who would support land redistribution (in the SA context) as just (rectification principles). Rawls would for other reasons support redistribution too. However, what are we distributing - land - and in what context is that taking place - an era of global warming and an open agricultural market place. So is land redistribution the just way to go. Yes, but no - for it is not sustainable and probably places the worst-off in a "more" worse off position (given the market AND global warming context) - so Rawls says through the sustainability principles. There are ample reason then to rethink Rawls, moreover, it problematises Marxist ideas in some cases and the neoliberal too (that's funny they agree on something). Whilst that argument is going, we can have the policy academic bring this argument in to the policy development domain. Ample reasons and ways in which to get Government(s) to listen. This debate can spark further research into global warming in the SA context - new ways of farming (types/ styles/ types of crops/ new areas to farm, etc.) might be considered for this context. In this way a philosophical question can set an agenda that is led by SSHL but involves the natural sciences directly. In short alot of what I propose in the</p>	<p>Quoting Rawls and Nozick works on land distribution.</p>		<p>related research than worrying about academic rating.</p> <p>There are plenty of ways and reasons to convince and get the Government involve.</p> <p>A call to change academic research practices.</p>
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		"research theme", is polical ecology. That in my view provides a strategic repositioning of local SSHL research discourse, is policy relevant and totally cross/inter-disciplinary. These notes are probably not what this consolidation phase is about. But perhaps the inductive nature thereof provides the opporunity for those more at ease and versed in "theory" to think of ways to shift the boundaries of knowledge. Perhaps the big thing for us as social sciences is to develop a project that leads the natural sciences and government policy development arena. Then again it sounds very familiar too. Cheers			
CS23	P25	<b>Re: Consolidation</b> – P20 has offered some provocative remarks/statements - I found myself identifying with his thinking. Finding myself somewhere halfway between academe and business I have often found myself wondering about the role of and research into the nature of knowledge. Perhaps being closely involved in projects to make companies and institutions in various industries more competitive I have often realised the gap between what's taught and what is required. Companies are perpetually under pressure to perform in highly competitive albeit socially conscious and legislative-rich business environments. What is it that would give one company an edge over another or make a particular institution perform better than another? In the end (and pardon the cliché) companies are about people. I have found that although new graduates have a solid theoretical foundation there is generally a serious lack of understanding of how information should be used to improve competitiveness and innovation and how the real world works. We need to focus on fostering entrepreneurial skills, new thought, give impetus and support to innovative thinking, teach the management of innovation and at the same time bring the real world into the world of the student/learner. <i>The skills required for innovation and competitiveness are three-fold in nature: They can be taught, acquired and honed through practice and some are inherent to the person - harnessing these skills for knowledge and research is a challenge in itself.</i>	Acknowledging P23 contributions and identifying areas of agreement	Factual Information (TG 2), Corporatism (DT2), Persuasion (TG4).	A call to equip new graduates with entrepreneurial skills Support innovative thinking among graduates.
CS24	P26	<b>consolidation/interdisciplinarity</b> – My apologies for joining the conversation so late in the conference! I had <i>limited access to the internet in</i>	Apologies Seeking to reach	Corporatism (DT2), Technocracy	Academics of same discipline needs to

		<p><i>the first part and some technical problems</i> thereafter. Hope I am not just repeating something that others have said but I am wondering about the extent to which the SSLH research community really sees itself as one community and are we perhaps still split on some disciplinary lines which through a forum like this we are only beginning to acknowledge. Even within those of us who might do more qualitative research and others quantitative within the same disciplinary area there may be great divisions and we sometimes forget to acknowledge each others work. How much greater might these divides be in the 'sslh community' as a whole? is there someway that we might follow this up in a post-conference activity particularly around, say, methodology/knowledge production? And perhaps <i>we need to look more closely at the kinds of problems we are even trying to address in our research as a way to deepen our conversations.</i> Just a thought and I will try to go back through the threads! Cheers.</p>	an understanding	(DT6).	<p>acknowledge each others work.</p> <p>Online discussions should be on the research problems.</p>
CS25	F1	<p><b>Re: consolidation/interdisciplinarity</b> – Hi P24, Thanks for making the effort to get here. I think that your call for us to "to look more closely at the kinds of problems we are even trying to address in our research as a way to deepen our conversations." is a very helpful input. Would you like to share insights from some of your research projects in relation to the challenges facing SSLH researchers?</p>	Acknowledging P24 contributions and identifying areas of agreements.	Corporatism (DT2), Pragmatism (DT4).	More contributions from P24 needed on has to add the new topic.

## APPENDIX C – REPLIES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

These are replies of participants who took part in the survey questions.

### Question: 1

**I found the objectives of Shifting Boundaries Online to be: (choose all that apply)**

Clearly Stated	Ambitious	Unrealistic	Difficult to understand	Other (please specify)	Open-Ended Response
Clearly Stated				Other (please specify)	I found the objectives vague. But if I understand the Delphi method correctly this was to be expected.
		Unrealistic	Difficult to understand	Other (please specify)	Assuming a framework that should have been up for negotiation
	Ambitious	Unrealistic		Other (please specify)	difficult to adhere to
	Ambitious		Difficult to understand		
Clearly Stated				Other (please specify)	Well put
Clearly Stated					
Clearly Stated					
Clearly Stated	Ambitious				
			Difficult to understand	Other (please specify)	I quite honestly did not give it too much attention on account of my very difficult work circumstances. When I read some of the summarised responses, I felt I could not really connect with them and t

Unrealistic

Other (please specify) wrongly conceived

**Question: 2**  
(Appendix D continues)

**These factors limited my participation in Shifting Boundaries Online (choose all that apply)**  
**interruptions from daily work**

	<b>slow or unreliable internet connection</b>	<b>limited access to a computer</b>	<b>urgent deadlines</b>	<b>family commitments</b>	<b>work related travel</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>	<b>Open-Ended Response</b>
interruptions from daily work			urgent deadlines		work related travel		
interruptions from daily work		limited access to a computer	urgent deadlines		work related travel		
interruptions from daily work	slow or unreliable internet connection		urgent deadlines		work related travel		
interruptions from daily work	slow or unreliable internet connection						
interruptions from daily work			urgent deadlines		work related travel		
						Other (please specify)	Just work pressures - otherwise no intrusions
			urgent		work related		

interruptions from daily work	deadlines	family commitments	travel	work related travel	Other (please specify)	Block class teaching and paper deadlines
interruptions from daily work	urgent deadlines			work related travel		
interruptions from daily work	urgent deadlines			work related travel		
interruptions from daily work	urgent deadlines	family commitments		work related travel		

**Questions: 3 – 5**  
(Appendix D continues)

<b>SQ 3</b> <b>How much time would you estimate that you spent in Shifting Boundaries Online (including reading and composing messages offline)</b>	<b>SQ 4</b> <b>The Internet connection that I mostly used to access Shifting Boundaries Online is:</b>	<b>SQ 5</b> <b>I mostly accessed Shifting Boundaries Online from:</b>
<b>Response</b> more than 10 hours between 2 and 5 hours more than 10 hours  between 5 and 10 hours between 2 and 5 hours between 2 and 5 hours between 2 and 5 hours between 2 and 5 hours	<b>Response</b> University network A dialup connection University network University network University network University network Broadband e.g. ADSL, wireless University network A dialup connection	<b>Response</b> Work Home Work Work Work Work Work Work Home

I never went online		
I never went online		
between 2 and 5 hours	University network	Work
less than 2 hours	University network	Work

**Questions: 6 – 7**  
(Appendix D continues)

**SQ 6**

**Was this your first online conference?**

**Response**

**SQ7**

**I found the conference website:**

**Response**

**Open-Ended Response**

Yes	easy to use	
Yes	difficult to navigate	
No	Other (please specify)	Manageable design, slow to load pages.
	Other (please specify)	Manageable on the whole but some sections were not easy to access
Yes	difficult to navigate	
Yes	manageable	
Yes	Other (please specify)	Fast and informative, continuously updated - Someone put in a lot of time and work - that is clear
Yes	manageable	
Yes	Other (please specify)	I lost posting writing online instead of writing offline and posting - very frustrating - limited my participation
No	easy to use	
Yes	Other (please specify)	Can't really say because I barely participated

**Question: 8**

(Appendix D continues)

**I sometimes held back from posting messages in Shifting Boundaries Online because of: (choose all that apply)**

Lack of time	Unfamiliarity with the technology	Discomfort with interdisciplinary conversation	I didn't want to post an incomplete answer	I just wanted to read	Other (please specify)	Open-Ended Response
Lack of time Lack of time				I just wanted to read	Other (please specify)	Just determining where to join in.
Lack of time	Unfamiliarity with the technology	Discomfort with interdisciplinary conversation	I didn't want to post an incomplete answer			
Lack of time	Unfamiliarity with the technology					
Lack of time		Discomfort with interdisciplinary conversation Discomfort with interdisciplinary conversation			Other (please specify)	I found it to be highly philosophical and high research terminology - things can be said so much simpler
Lack of time						

Lack of time	Other (please specify)	lost posting writing in the online box - very frustrating
Lack of time	Other (please specify)	The conversations were rambling and unproductive
Lack of time	Other (please specify)	In fact I didn't post anything. The topics were abstract and required one to think through them carefully. Given the current pace at work, there was no time to carefully consider anything.

**Question: 9**  
**(Appendix C continues)**

**These factors motivated my participation in Shifting Boundaries Online: (choose all that apply)**

<b>Involvement of colleagues</b>	<b>Possibility of input to NRF policy</b>	<b>Daily updates</b>	<b>Issues that I wanted to raise</b>	<b>Inputs by conference facilitators</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>	<b>Open-Ended Response</b>
Involvement of colleagues	Possibility of input to NRF policy Possibility of input to NRF policy			Inputs by conference		

Involvement of colleagues	Possibility of input to NRF policy		Issues that I wanted to raise	Inputs by conference facilitators	
Involvement of colleagues	Possibility of input to NRF policy	Daily updates	Issues that I wanted to raise	Inputs by conference facilitators	
Involvement of colleagues		Daily updates		Inputs by conference facilitators	
Involvement of colleagues	Possibility of input to NRF policy		Issues that I wanted to raise		
Involvement of colleagues	Possibility of input to NRF policy	Daily updates		Inputs by conference facilitators	
					Other (please specify)
					I had originally wanted to participate because I had issues that I wanted to raise and that I would have loved to get feedback on, but eventually, I failed to raise anything.

**Questions: 10 – 12**  
(Appendix D continues)

<b>SQ 10</b> <b>I would have preferred to share comments anonymously in Shifting Boundaries Online</b> <b>Response</b>	<b>SQ 11</b> <b>I found it interesting to read comments by colleagues in Shifting Boundaries Online</b> <b>Response</b>	<b>SQ 12</b> <b>Mention one or two messages that engaged your interest</b>  <b>Open-Ended Response</b>
Strongly disagree	Strongly Agree	Discussion about the boundaries that make interdisciplinary work difficult but that eventually led to discussion about how to bridge disciplinary and epistemological differences. Discussions that raised the issue of the role SSLH in the NRF and the value of research based policy development.
Strongly disagree	Undecided	I can't clearly remember specific topic-author combinations here, and don't have time to go back over the forums. There were a good number (more than one or two) of substantial and thoughtful messages that engaged my interest.
Disagree	Agree	Cannot remember all the names but P11, P9 and, I think, P3, were very engaging.
Agree	Strongly Agree	The transdisciplinary debate The contributions by P19.
Strongly disagree	Strongly Agree	Many conversations about whether we can have transdisciplinary conversations given the discipline specific nature of our discourses. Enjoyed some of the dry sense of humour e.g. P6's comment that a true SSLH community would be like a gathering of 'people who have not seen the sound of music' or something like that!
Disagree	Strongly Disagree	The focus in the later stage on linking 'boundary shifts' to the business of (government, private sector, etc.) business.
Strongly disagree	Strongly Agree	P6's red herring engaged my interest, not sure it was useful really.
Strongly disagree	Strongly Agree	
Disagree	Agree	

Strongly disagree  
Disagree

Agree  
Agree

Contributions by P6 and P20  
N/A As I said above, I did not really engage in the process.

**Questions: 13 – 17**  
**(Appendix D continues)**

SQ13	SQ 14	SQ 15	SQ16	SQ 17
<p><b>Which of the discussions did you find the most useful and why?</b></p>	<p><b>The discussions in Shifting Boundaries Online were relevant to my concerns as a SSLH researcher</b></p>	<p><b>Mention up to three highlights of Shifting Boundaries Online</b></p>	<p><b>Mention up to three frustrations of Shifting Boundaries Online</b></p>	<p><b>The single biggest improvement to Shifting Boundaries Online would be:</b></p>
<p><b>Open-Ended Response</b> Those discussions in which the threads lengthened. Greater involvement of participants (probably because those discussions struck a chord) and greater depth and exploration of the issues.</p>	<p><b>Response</b></p>	<p><b>Open-Ended Response</b> Making new contacts. Finding that the participants shared a common interest in conducting research to make a difference, regardless of disciplinary and epistemic differences. The general enthusiasm of those who remained in the conversation</p>	<p><b>Open-Ended Response</b> Too few of those that presented original papers participated. Too many of the participants who began online dropped out thus reducing the potential of the conference.</p>	<p><b>Open-Ended Response</b> To have a clearer idea of what these conversations were about in terms of the goals of the NRF. It often felt as if the primary underlying theme of the NRF was that SSLH has to establish itself as worthy of research support.</p>
<p>I'm not sure that I found any of them useful. I hope that most of them were useful to those who initiated the exercise, and I think that all who participated would find it interesting to know which</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>I never really felt as though I understood the point of the exercise (including the series of workshops before the online conference), or why it was being initiated as it was.</p>	<p>A faster and more low-tech interface (even as an option) would have helped a lot.</p>
	<p>Undecided</p>			
	<p>Undecided</p>			

discussions they did find useful.				
Most of it, although I didn't think all of it was useful to the objectives	Agree	Following the debates and interactions, being exposed to the commitments and understandings of interdisciplinarity of fellow academics, understanding some of the challenges that some academics perceive	Time and other commitments that kept interrupting focus keeping up with the different strands (I know it was meant to be a bit of a smorgasbord but all were interesting) complexity of lines of argument some confusion about objectives	If possible keep the number of different debates limited to say 3 at a time
Transdisciplinary debate The ontology/epistemology goings on!	Agree	Making connections with people Realising that I was not alone in my concerns	Loading time Not being clear at what level to 'pitch' the discussion. The extremely small number that contributed Perhaps the lack of access to the original thought or position papers	Not tackling such a monstrous field!
Those around how discourses shape disciplines and world-views.	Agree	Levels of debate Mostly I 'lurked' and enjoyed reading the ways in which others defend their understandings of knowledge	Time Not being entirely sure of what the goals were , Too many different topics/discussion boards (or whatever they are called) so you got the feeling that there were different parallel conversations.	
	Agree			
	Agree	Updated Views expressed		

<p>not many - too much academic withdrawal - reluctance to make a commitment to positions I didn't really find the conversations useful, because the issues raised in the Eastern Cape papers had disappeared from the agenda of the Online Conference.</p>	<p>Disagree</p>	<p>the website the support – F1 &amp; company did an excellent job</p>	<p>quality of inputs lack of willingness to engage and take risks lack of identification of real issues</p>	<p>improve the inputs from academics international contributors might help</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>Disagree</p>	<p>The technology worked well. The Shifting Boundaries staff were exemplary. The conference revealed potential for better, properly focused discussions on specific issues.</p>	<p>Lack of coherence in the threads. Evident nonsensical assumption about the existence of an SSLH research community. This is just an administrative category invoked by the NRF for (perfectly understandable) reasons of convenience. Lack of participation by SA research leaders. I found it extremely frustrating to want to participate but to be unable to do so due to all other commitments, all of which were really must-do-now's and non-negotiable.</p>	<p>Its replacement by more narrowly focused discussions on disciplinary and inter-disciplinary issues.</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>I am quite certain that online conferencing does not meet my needs. Given the pace at work (and being in a lecturer in a professional degree which requires extensive field practice supervision and out of office commitments the pace is unlikely to change) it seems much easier to block off three days or so in order to attend a conference (thereby being physically away from the office) than to squeeze in five minutes here and there so as to contribute to</p>

something rather complex and demanding that would require my proper attention. So I would prefer a traditional conference format.

**Questions: 18 – 19**  
(Appendix D continues)

**SQ 18**

**I found Shifting Boundaries Online to be: (choose all that apply)**

<b>Warm and friendly</b>	<b>Lonely</b>	<b>Stimulating</b>	<b>Overwhelming</b>	<b>Challenging</b>	<b>Confusing</b>
Warm and friendly	Lonely	Stimulating		Challenging	Confusing
		Stimulating		Challenging	Confusing
Warm and friendly		Stimulating			
		Stimulating		Challenging	
		Stimulating		Challenging	
Warm and friendly					
Warm and friendly					
Warm and friendly					

**SQ 19**

**Shifting Boundaries Online was**

<b>Response</b>
Three weeks was just right
Too short
Three weeks was just right
Three weeks was just right
Three weeks was just right
Too short
Three weeks was just right
Three weeks was just right

**Questions: 20 – 23**

(Appendix D continues)

<p><b>SQ 20</b>  <b>I found the daily updates informative and interesting</b>   <b>Response</b></p>	<p><b>SQ 21</b>  <b>I would like to continue similar networking with other SSLH researchers online after Shifting Boundaries Online</b>   <b>Response</b></p>	<p><b>SQ22</b>  <b>I would like to continue similar networking with other SSLH researchers face to face after Shifting Boundaries Online</b>   <b>Response</b></p>	<p><b>SQ 23</b>  <b>Any closing comments?</b>   <b>Open-Ended Response</b></p>
Undecided	Agree	Agree	<p>The conversation has really just begun and the conference needs to be followed up with a more pragmatic definition of the role of SSLH in the NRF. What kind of research? An interesting possibility is to have participants presented with an important social policy issue and then to see what the different disciplines have to say. Maybe then the real possibilities of 'shifting boundaries' will emerge.</p> <p>My previous two answers are conditional on it seeming as though the networking has a realistic prospect of informing policy, by means that seem to make sense.</p> <p>Thanks for the initiative, it has already made a huge difference to how I understand my own interdisciplinary research and teaching, and to my sense of what needs to be done in the various areas in which I have been working (e.g., research, scholarship, editing work, supervision and curriculum dev)</p> <p>For a 'first off' I think we learned much from this and I look forward to more such endeavours</p> <p>Despite the constraints of time, and my feelings of insecurity about the discourses being thrown around, I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent online in this conference. Thank you very much for the opportunity.</p> <p>Found all areas interesting</p>
Undecided	Agree	Agree	
Undecided	Agree	Agree	
Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	
Agree	Agree	Agree	
	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	
Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	

Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	<p>good effort by the NRF - exposes the limitations of academic community however - might want to think about doing this on a disciplinary basis before moving interdisciplinarily - might get more substantive comments and then be able to explore overlaps more meaningfully</p> <p>This round came at a terribly busy time (lecturing and writing) for me and I regret not participating. I am also not used to on-line work of this nature!, but am committed to participate in any follow-up - especially face-tot-face one day in-depth discussions.</p> <p>This came at at very difficult time when I had to travel and meet several deadlines both in relation to management expectations and responsiveness to undergraduate and postgraduate students. On reading some of the summarised responses I could not really connect with the issues and felt that I had nothing valuable to contribute. I might have felt more comfortable to deal with and clarify issues with the opportunity for face to face meetings. I would not mind participating in face to face meetings if we dealt with salient issues in more directed and clear ways. As the discussions were summarised, I did not really appreciate what was expected of me and was not really motivated to go online to participate.</p> <p>I think this was a brave and interesting attempt to convene a relevant conversation. But I think it needed to be set up according to agendas determined by researchers - I return to the issue of the mismatch between what was said at the provincial colloquium (and presumably at other similar meetings), and the parameters established for the national conference.</p> <p>As above, the online conference format is not suitable to my needs. However, if it was the only available option, timing would be important. Please let it be during semester break and not in the middle of term again.</p>
Agree	Agree	Agree	
	Agree	Strongly Agree	
	Disagree	Undecided	
	Agree	Agree	
Agree	Disagree	Agree	