



Bricolage in system design and trust in cooperation

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During several years of friendship and joint work with Claudio, starting from the teaching experience we had in the University of Calabria at the beginning of our academic careers, we shared a lot of common moments, friends, interests and experiences. His original way of thinking and the results of his work strongly influenced and stimulated both my own approach in IS research and recently, the overall process of constitution of the Italian research community of Information Systems.

I found his metaphors, such as bricolage, improvisation, tinkering, hospitality, and care, illuminating when I was investigating the conceptual relationship of ICT and human activity in phenomena such as the development process of an Information System or new forms of cooperation among organisations.

In the first case, I considered relevant his concept of bricolage to better understand alternative ways of thinking at the development process of an Information System. For instance, the classical views of structured and rigid processes in software production, based on managerial methods of measurement and control, have recently been upset by new paradigms, such as the extreme programming. My investigation assumption is that it is possible to apply the same paradigms to the overall process of Information Systems development taking into account the context of emerging circumstances and 'recognising the importance of bricolage vs the over-inflated role of method and planning in strategic applications' as Claudio suggested.

Moreover, in the context of cooperative systems, the unpredictable behaviour of actors involved and the openness of technology, made me investigate new roles of technology and new forms of cooperation based on trust mechanisms instead of hierarchical structures. A relevant influence to this point is all the Claudio's work on drift as the outcome of tactics, ruses and improvisations.

In my opinion, the overall scientific community will appreciate his efforts in bringing forward a world of IS practices and management based on an understanding of lived human experiences and emotional aspects of human existence and actions rather than abstractions of ideal rational behaviour.

Another important contribution of Claudio was his commitment in the constitution process of the Italian Information Systems research community. Despite his own complex and difficult relationship with the Italian academy he put a lot of effort into this task using the same enthusiasm that guided his research activity. The interesting aspect of this contribution is the approach he used, completely coherent with his research findings. He always refused strategic approaches based on plans and programmes carried out by rigid power structures, on the contrary he opted for a bottom up approach, setting up a network of motivated people interested in this topic. The growing dimension of this community will demonstrate the success of ideas such as bricolage and improvisation.

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