

A Model for the Social Construction of Risk in the Audit and Certification of Trustworthy Digital Repositories

REBECCA D. FRANK

Abstract:

Digital preservation research regarding trustworthy digital repository (TDR) certification has focused on technical, economic, and organizational factors (e.g. Lavoie, 2008; Lavoie & Dempsey, 2004). This is not sufficient to account for a complex view of the world. In this presentation I will discuss findings from my ongoing dissertation research, in which I propose a model that treats TDR certification as a process that is carried out by individuals within organizations, who are themselves influenced by social factors.

Digital preservation challenges, or risks, cannot be considered as merely technical, economic, or organizational. Rather, digital preservation is also a social process in which risks are constructed and interpreted by individuals. Their subsequent actions are then influenced by social factors that shape their understanding of those risks (e.g. communication, complexity, expertise, organizations, trust, uncertainty, and vulnerability). The theories that form the basis for this model argue that risk has different meanings for different actors (e.g. Renn, 2008), and that social factors influence how those actors construct their understanding of risk (e.g. Wilkinson, 2001). They hold that social factors can “[intensify] hazardous situations and [enhance] their negative consequences” (Gordy, 2016, p. 15).

I will report on the results of 21 semi-structured interviews with auditors and standards developers in order to address questions about how they conceptualize risk in the context of ISO 16363, and the differences and similarities by which auditors and standards developers understand risk as it has been communicated by ISO 16363.

About the author:

Rebecca D. Frank is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Michigan School of Information (UMSI). She is in the process of writing her dissertation and expects to graduate April 2018. Her dissertation research examines the social construction of risk in the audit and certification of trustworthy digital repositories. She also conducts research in the areas of digital preservation, digital curation, and data reuse, focusing on social and ethical barriers that limit or prevent the preservation, sharing, and reuse of digital information.

Rebecca is currently a Graduate Student Research Assistant on the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) supported Qualitative Data Reuse: Records of Practice in Educational Research and Teacher Development (QDR) project and has previously worked on the IMLS supported Dissemination Information Packages for Information Reuse (DIPIR) project. She has an MSI from the University of Michigan School of Information with a specialization in Preservation of Information, and a BA in Organizational Studies from the University of Michigan. Her work has been supported by the National Science Foundation and the Australian Academy of Science.