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Editorial

Cross-cultural user perceptions of website design and security: Introduction to a commentary and response on Cyr (2013)

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Just as the well-known statistician, George Box, commented in a 1978 paper, “All models are wrong, but some are useful,” so are there many ways to design research inquiry approaches to explore issues in various e-commerce contexts – all useful too.

In the two brief essays that follow, the reader will see a written commentary and a response that illustrates this idea. It occurred between a technology researcher who published an article on cross-cultural issues in website design in Cyr (2013), and an economist who is able to offer useful insights on the statistical work and data analytics with methods that are not shared by the original author.

The dialogue involves the author, Dianne Cyr, Professor of Information Systems at the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University in Canada, and Professor Leo Van Hove, Department of Applied Economics at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Free University of Brussels). The author of the 2013 ECRA article shares the logic of her theoretical and analytical approach in her research, to help the reader understand the nature of her ongoing research inquiry in Technology Design and Information Systems Research. The commentator shares alternative views on the appropriateness of the data, the analysis approach, and the interpretation of the research results. Both contributors offer comments and reactions that are unique to their separate disciplinary outlooks and different methods perspectives. Researchers who do econometrics and statistical analysis can readily provide helpful comments across many areas of research that employ these techniques. Researchers who become deeply involved in the contextual details of their information technology (IT) contexts often do not have extensive experience in data analytics to gauge the possibilities of different methodological approaches, but they are deeply aware of the potential issues that may arise around their empirical inquiries. The idea of this cross-disciplinary exchange is consistent with the purpose of ECRA as a journal: to bring together disparate perspectives and approaches on some of the interesting problems of our time in e-commerce. I find that there is something useful to learn from both writers.

As ECRA's Editor in Chief, I acted as the editor of the written discussion between the authors, whose own arguments and analysis are presented. The only constraint was that there needed to be the opportunity for point and counterpoint, and that what resulted would enrich an ECRA reader's understanding and appreciation of how the research is done in a specific area of e-commerce scholarship, technology and website design. My goal is to encourage ECRA's readers to learn something from what they read, based on the efforts of two different people with contrasting knowledge, expertise and empirical research experience.

At ECRA, my approach is to encourage different interdisciplinary views on research that can aid our understanding for an e-commerce research area like you see discussed here, that exists in the connecting space across multiple disciplines. I would like to extend my thanks to Professor Cyr for contributing the original article, which is already beginning to be cited. And I would like to thank Professor Van Hove also his contribution and his patience with the process that Elsevier and I worked out so it would be possible to give the author a chance to share useful information.