"Yin and Yang": Integrating the Bright Side into Dark Side Research in IS

TREO Talk Paper

David Agogo
Operations and Information Management Department, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
dagogo@som.umass.edu

Traci J. Hess
Operations and Information Management Department, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
thess@isenberg.umass.edu

Abstract

Given the prominence and ubiquity of information technologies in the lives of individuals world over, there have been several calls for more research into the post-adoption realities of technology use. In response to these calls, research on negative responses to technology use, 'dark side' research, is gaining momentum as evidenced by conference mini-tracks (e.g. AMCIS 2014, 2016, ICIS 2015) and journal special issues calling for research on 'dark side' concepts (e.g., Tarafdar, Gupta, & Turel, 2013). At the same time, senior information systems (IS) scholars have called for adopting a "positive lens" in IS research, and the recent Bright ICT Initiative has the goal of promoting greater responsibility and ethics with technology that can prevent undesirable online activities (Lee, 2015). While the research stream on negative responses to technology is strengthening and a stream on positive responses is starting, there has been little research that has considered both positive and negative concepts simultaneously.

IS researchers have not yet internalized an important consensus within the reference field of psychology, that positive and negative concepts are distinct and not merely opposite ends of the same scale. Research in psychology has shown that high levels of both positive and negative concepts can exist together, and efforts to combat the negative do not necessarily build on positives. In IS, a balanced and integrated study of both positive and negative responses to technology has not been conducted. Further, negative responses to technology, such as computer anxiety, technostress, and technophobia, are studied with no clear matching positive concepts.

In this talk, a brief review of dark-side concepts in IS research is presented and future opportunities for identifying new matching positive concepts are offered. Specific examples of positive matching concepts to computer anxiety, technostress, and technophobia are offered, and an integrated research model is proposed. Initial empirical work to validate measures for positive and negative concepts is discussed and pilot research that includes both positive and negative concepts in a balanced and integrated way is reported. The authors would like to obtain feedback from colleagues on the practical and theoretical relevance of such a balanced approach, and get suggestions on how to proceed with further study in this area. Importantly, comments about the relevance of this approach towards discipline-wide initiatives such as the Bright ICT Initiative are sought.

References

Lee, J. K. (2015). Guest editorial: research framework for AIS grand vision of the bright ICT initiative. *MIS Quarterly*, *39*(2), iii–xii.

Tarafdar, M., Gupta, A., & Turel, O. (2013). The dark side of information technology use. *Information Systems Journal*, *23*(3), 269–275. https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12015