

# What to do with Geeks and Nerds? A Collaborative Website Analysis Workshop

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## **Wildcard proposal: What to do with Geeks and Nerds? A Collaborative Website Analysis Workshop**

Social scientists no longer have to travel far and wide for data on social life, as it is now available at our fingertips on the web. However, many of the techniques normally used in traditional research such as participant-observation and the writing of field notes, need to be adapted quite a bit for use in this new media. Rather than data being expensive and precious, the dilemma becomes how to choose from so much information and how to store and analyze it in meaningful ways that remain acceptable within more traditional fields of study.

In this interactive workshop, we will start by introducing our previous work on IT occupational culture, the stereotypes of geeks and nerds, and the potential implications of these stereotypes in the recruiting of people to information technology careers. Taking the topic of *geeks and nerds in the IT culture* as the topic for our web research, we will describe our experiences on conducting web research by archiving websites using the Mozilla Firefox scrapbook Add-on tool. We will talk about the tool and its features and briefly provide examples of previous research explorations. Then, we will present examples of our research journey on our topic using the scrapbook tool collecting and analyzing data from several websites (commercial sites, blogs, videos) as an experiment to see what we can learn about the culture of geeks and nerds by viewing different types of websites. Finally, as the heart of the workshop, we will have a collective activity of brainstorming, applying, and comparing techniques for webpage analysis, using the topic of geeks and nerds in the IT culture as subject material for discussion. We plan to form multidisciplinary groups from the audience and facilitate a half-hour break-out session to allow the smaller groups to share ideas and summarize their initial findings. The groups will then reunite for a large-group exchange about archiving and analysis of websites about a certain theme.

The organizers of this workshop embody a multi-disciplinary approach in all of our work and look forward to the opportunity to forge diverse groups to help analyze the websites from different perspectives and inspire new thinking about possible methods for website analysis.

Indira Guzman is an Assistant Professor in the College of Information Systems and

the College of Business Administration at TUI University. With a background as a chief and administrator of information systems, she has conducted research in human resource in IT, career orientations, IT occupational culture, gender and ethnic diversity, recruitment, and retention. She obtained her PhD from the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University. Kathryn Stam is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the SUNY Institute of Technology, and has brought her ethnographic experience to her study of the effects of technology on social relationships in the workplace and within the family. She and SU's Jeff Stanton recently published a book called *The Visible Employee: using workplace monitoring and surveillance to protect information assets- without compromising employee privacy or trust*. Michael Scialdone is a doctoral student from the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University with experience, conference presentations and publications related to ethnography of massive multi-player online role-playing games (MMORPG's) including *Furcadia* and *Runescape*.