PAMELA KARR-WISNIEWSKI

3912 Canterbrook Drive
Charlotte, NC 28269

http://www.pamspam.com

pam@pamspam.com
(704) 293-8978

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To secure a tenure-track assistant professor position at a top research university starting Fall 2012. Specifically, I desire to be part of a highly collaborative Information Systems research environment at a university that also emphasizes teaching excellence.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

When air conditioning was introduced into homes during the early 1900's, it changed the nation. People no longer spent hours outside on their porches interacting with their neighbors. Instead, they went inside, and we became a nation of single-family homes opposed to communities. Similarly, in the early 2000's, cell phones were becoming a common personal appliance. Now, college students across the country can be seen walking from one class to another texting and chatting on their phones with friends they knew growing up, no matter their location. Unlike when I was an undergraduate, students rarely hang out on the grass in the campus plaza, enjoying a free plate of food from the local Hare Krishnas, and turning strangers into new friends. This observation is consistent with research that shows individuals have fewer close friends overall than in the previous two decades.

While humans have the awesome ability to create new technologies, we often have no idea how these technologies will truly impact the way we live. This is what fascinates me. Not only do we have to adapt to interacting with these new technologies, we also have to adapt how we interact with *each other* given technology as a medium. "Information Technology (IT) artifacts are always embedded in some time, place, discourse, and community . . . and these conditions, both material and cultural, cannot be ignored, abstracted, or assumed away," said Orilkowski and Iacono (2001). My research interests are situated at the boundary of where humans end and IT begins. I am interested in the meta-cognition (one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes) of technology use to optimize positive individual, interpersonal, and organizational outcomes.

Early research areas I have explored include how individuals associate self and other to websites, how individuals interact with virtual, interactive maps, and how organizations leverage technology as a strategy to generate IT value. One major stream of my research dealt with technology overload in the workplace. The basic idea is that more technology is not necessarily better. More technology use does not always lead to increased productivity and can sometimes, in fact, be counterproductive. I proposed a new concept called "technology crowding" which occurs when additional technology usage produces diminishing marginal returns and eventually impedes productivity. Through empirical methods, I validated that information, system feature, and communication overload were three salient dimensions of technology crowding. My research findings concluded that knowledge workers who demonstrated a high level of technology dependence were significantly and negatively impacted by technology overload. Furthermore, this relationship was even more pronounced for women than for men.

My dissertation research examines interpersonal boundary regulation within online social networks (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc.). According to Neilson Media in 2010, Americans spend over a quarter of their time online engaged on online social networking activities. Social networking has become ubiquitous at home and in the workplace. Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's CEO, reports that privacy is no longer the social norm for Facebook's 750 million users and that openness and sharing equate to interpersonal connection. Yet, social psychologists consistently assert that healthy interpersonal boundaries are vital for both personal well-being and relational development. While online social networking has irrefutable benefits, my research proposes that improved support for interpersonal boundary regulation can enhance these benefits further. First, I am examining what types of boundary mechanisms are relevant to online social networking environments. The strategies we use for regulating our social interactions with others in the physical world often do not translate to this new, virtual environment. For example, eye contact and physical distance. Conversely, new boundary challenges have emerged online that do not exist elsewhere. For instance, our social network structures are publicly exposed and traversable by all of our connections. Second, I am interested in the ways in which individuals negotiate their boundaries within online social networks. I have completed an in-depth interface analysis of multiple social network sites to assess the technological affordances they provide for boundary regulation. I have completed over 20 interviews with end users to explore how they use these features or develop coping mechanisms outside of the interfaces. Third, my goal is to find evidence that improved boundary regulation can improve individual, interpersonal, and network level outcomes such as self-esteem, intimacy, and social capital, respectively.

PAMELA KARR-WISNIEWSKI

3912 Canterbrook Drive
Charlotte, NC 28269

http://www.pamspam.com

pam@pamspam.com
(704) 293-8978

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

"Don't be confused. This is a classroom, not a lecture," I said to my students as I welcomed them to class in a 280 capacity auditorium seating lecture hall. "I don't want you to think that I am going to stand up here and talk for three hours. That's a lecture. That's boring for both you and me. A classroom is interactive where you give your input and help make sure you get what you need from this class." I expect my students to be active participants in class and encourage this by asking directed questions and treating them like adults. It is important to me to entertain points-of-view that are contradictory to the text and to add my real-world industry knowledge to show students that questioning facts is encouraged for deeper learning of a topic. I received the best compliment this past semester; a student said that he was usually shy in class but my classroom had been the first time he felt comfortable enough to express his opinions and contribute to class discussions. My classroom environment is casual and engaging to the point that we've been reminded to close the door so others aren't disturbed by our spirited conversations and even laughter. My students know that I have fun teaching which helps make otherwise dry materials more enjoyable to learn. For example, to introduce my lecture on JavaScript cookies, I bring Oreos and Chips Ahoy! to class for my students. I joke, "Enjoy these cookies because after today, you will never look at cookies the same way ever again." Learning can be both fun and productive.

I feel that many university level courses have become "one-size-fits-all," where professors do not take the students' goals into account. Therefore, I make it a point to learn my students' names and find out their individual career objectives. In Web-Application Development (ITIS 2300), many of my freshman and sophomore students were still uncertain about their career paths. Their first assignment ("Different Hats") was were to go to corporate websites and research job postings for web developers, business analysts, project managers, network administrators, and other roles that were involved in web application development. Throughout the semester, I mentored students to align their career goals to their strengths. For instance, I encouraged some students to consider a role as a business analyst because they enjoyed technology, were articulate writers, and hated programming. In addition, I taught Management Information Systems (INFO 3130) to college-level seniors, most of whom were not MIS majors. One common complaint students have about this course is that the material is not relevant to their future careers in marketing, accounting, finance, international business, or other business related fields. To mitigate this, I divided project groups by majors and assigned students a software demo of a functional business system that was relevant to their fields. As an example, marketing majors chose to demo Salesforce, a leading Customer Relationship Management (CRM) application. The end result was that each student realized how information technology was relevant to their major and their future career. Because I have industry experience and my students know that I am interested in their personal end goals, they often contact me for advice even months after taking my class.

While my students generally like my teaching style, they have never called any of my classes easy. In fact, I have a reputation among students for having the most challenging section (if taught simultaneously by multiple instructors) and heaviest course loads (across all classes a student is enrolled in for a semester). I do not believe in assigning busy work; my assignments are difficult yet they are a practical application of the course materials. For instance, the end deliverable for my web development course was a fully functional personal portfolio website to showcase students' experience and skills to potential employers. Though this was a rigorous goal, many students informed me that their website played a large role in obtaining a summer internship or entry level job. One student said, "I entered her class without any web development skills, and shortly after completing her class, I was able to obtain a position at a web development company." I believe that students need to be pushed to achieve their full potential. My students complain during the semester, but in the end, they are surprised by how much they have learned and are proud of their accomplishments.

Over time, I have realized and gladly accepted the fact that challenging students also means challenging myself. In most cases, I have created all of my own lecture materials, assignments, and examples for the courses I teach. I know that more assignments means more grading but I will not commit to teaching a class that I do not believe is conducive for my students to learn. Therefore, most of my classes have weekly assignments. I don't foresee myself ever teaching a course that consists of three scantron exams as the only way to test a students' mastery of the course. Because I ask so much of my students, I also make sure they know I am approachable for help. My office hours often morph into study sessions with 3-10 students. I help students on a first-come-first-serve basis and then have those students in turn assist their classmates because I believe one of the best ways to learn is to teach. Part of the reason I enjoy teaching is because I continue to learn as well. As for my teaching preferences, I am most interested in teaching theoretical fundamentals and strategic business application of information technology. This includes but is not limited to systems analysis and design, database design, management information systems, human-computer interaction, and information systems economics, strategy, and policy. I also have extensive experience teaching web-based programming such as XHTML, CSS, and JavaScript. However, I am confident that I could also teach courses in other programming languages, telecommunications, quantitative decision-making, and introductory operations management.