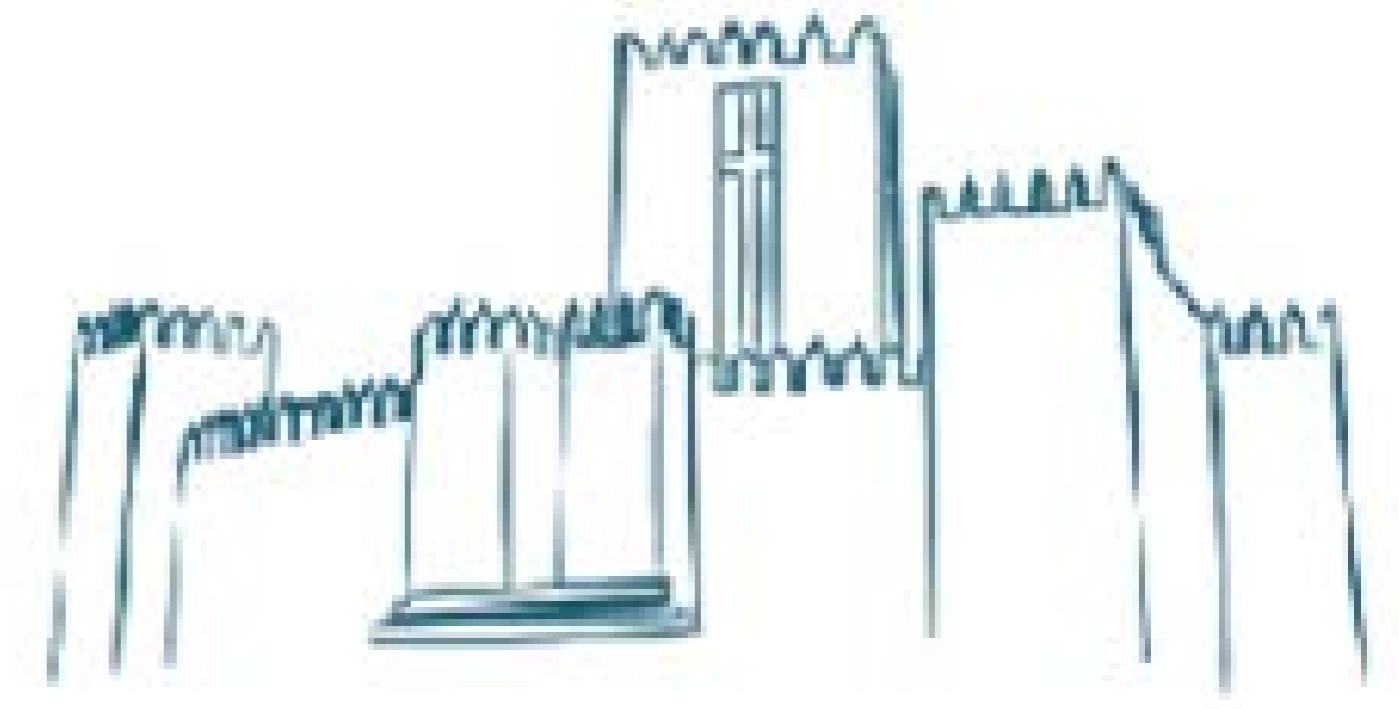


THE CONTENT & CONTEXT OF IDENTITY IN A DIGITAL SOCIETY

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STUDY MOTIVATION

IT identity is *the extent to which an individual views use of an IT as integral to his or her sense of self* (Carter & Grover, 2015). While identification and identity are relevant to domains of technology, we lack a conceptualization of the context and content of IT identity itself. In this sense, our current understanding of IT identity is akin to seeing ripples in a pond but not the object that made them.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What aspects of a person's self-concept define who s/he is in relation to information technology? What is an IT identity?
2. When (or under what conditions) is IT
 - a) a resource for role or social identity verification
 - b) a means of IT identity verification
 - c) both at the same time?

METHODOLOGY

We use the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) to explore the ways in which IT and identity intersect. We use Kuhn & McPartland's (1954) Twenty-Statement Test to elicit identities prior to a semi-structured interview where we explore the meanings of

1. their identities
2. their use of technology
3. the relationships between them



PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

We have completed six interviews. The word cloud above shows keywords from the identities our participants claimed.

Preliminary findings indicate that IT use and personal, role, and social identities have a number of intersections, as shown in the figure below. As concepts emerge, the research will seek to identify a core concept. Currently, our understanding of IT identity is akin to seeing ripples in a pond but not the object that made them. Interviews will continue through 2018.

IT as Extension of Self

- *"That's one thing I cannot live without...[digital cameras]...And I feel really insecure when I don't have my camera with me. Because something could happen, and I don't... I have no way of capturing it. So I keep two cameras in the car. I have at least one camera with me at all times."*
–Chris, Photographer

IT Identity

- *"I am my calendar. I don't feel that about my texting or my emails as much as my calendar..."*
- *"We are not an Apple house. [...] I will probably get an iPhone [for work purposes] but I will be embarrassed to have it. [...] Once I get one I am going to be apologetic and self-deprecating for the first three months. 'I finally caved.' Bleah."*
–Rachel, Mom, Hub

Self-presentation through IT

- *"...it is like a palpable sense of satisfaction that I guess comes from feeling like your contributions are valued and there is a certain kind of new sort of status. I mean, it allows, it's almost like you're this micro-celebrity within your own social network. Everybody is paying attention to you and they really like you and what you do or say."*
–Kevin, Information Addict