

# 2016 輔仁大學圖書館與資訊社會研討會 專題演講（一）

## **Theory Development in the Information Sciences: Reflecting on the Process**

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Emerging as a discipline in the first half of the twentieth century, the information sciences study how people, groups, organizations, and governments create, share, disseminate, manage, search, access, evaluate, and protect information, as well as how different technologies and policies can facilitate and constrain these activities. Given the broad span of the information sciences, it is perhaps not surprising that there is no consensus regarding its underlying theory—the purposes of it, the types of it, or how one goes about developing new theories.

A new book, *Theory Development in the Information Sciences* edited by Sonnenwald, seeks to shed light on these issues by sharing reflections on the theory development process. These reflections focus on the struggles, challenges, successes, and excitement of developing theories. The particular theories that the contributors explore in their essays range widely, from theories of literacy and reading to theories of design and digital search. Several chapters engage with theories of the behavior of individuals and groups; some deal with processes of evaluation; others reflect on questions of design; and the rest treat cultural and scientific heritage. Chapter contributors are (in alphabetical order) Bates, Bawden, Buckland, Carroll, Chang, Crew, Dillion, Järvelin, Kuhlthau, McGann, Meadows, Nardi, Olson and Olson, Saracevic and Thelwall.

In this talk Sonnenwald will discuss different types of theories and illuminate the theory development process based on a synthesis of the chapters. The ultimate goal is to encourage, inspire, and assist individuals striving to use, develop and/or teach theory development.