

Lecture by Eileen Trauth, 9. June 2008: Theorizing Research on Gender and ICT

etrauth@ist.psu.edu

Eileen M. Trauth is Associate Dean for Diversity, Outreach and International Engagement, Professor of Information Sciences and Technology and Director of the Center for the Information Society at The Pennsylvania State University. During March – June 2008 she holds the Universität Klagenfurt – Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Gender Studies. Her research is concerned with societal, cultural and organizational influences on information technology and the information technology professions with a special focus on the role of diversity within the field. As a Fulbright Scholar in Ireland, Dr. Trauth undertook a multi-year investigation of socio-cultural influences on the emergence of Ireland's information economy. She has also analyzed cultural, economic, infrastructure and public policy influences on the development of information technology occupational clusters in the U.S. Dr. Trauth has investigated gender under representation in the information technology professions in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the United States with grants from the National Science Foundation and Science Foundation Ireland. In addition to her work on gender, she has published papers and books on qualitative research methods, global informatics, information policy, information management and information systems skills.

Abstract

Theorizing Research on Gender and ICT

Dr. Trauth has been engaged in empirical testing of a theory to explain the under representation of women in the ICT workforce. The initial work on this Individual Differences Theory of Gender and IT resulted from a field study of gender and ICT in Australia and New Zealand. Subsequent work in the US (funded by grants from the National Science Foundation) and Ireland (funded by a grant from Science Foundation Ireland) has focused on greater articulation of this theory and broader empirical testing. This theoretical perspective argues that the causes of gender under representation can be found in the varied individual responses to generalized societal influences. Hence, fieldwork is directed at investigating the individual variations across genders as a result of the combination of individual identity characteristics, individual influences, and environmental influences, in order to understand the participation of women in the ICT workforce. Hence, the

focus of this research is on differences within rather than between genders. A lecture in cooperation of: IFZ; Zentrum für Frauen- und Geschlechterstudien (ZFG), University Klagenfurt; Koordinationsstelle für Geschlechterstudien, Frauenforschung und Frauenförderung, University of Graz