



INFORMATICS  
EUROPE



Software Innovation Campus Paderborn

**No risk, no fun!  
How to work  
successfully in  
inter- and  
transdisciplinary  
projects**

**Gregor Engels**

Paderborn University

**Working in a multidisciplinary  
environment: opportunities and  
pitfalls**

**October 24, 2016 - Budapest**



**1981 – 1986**

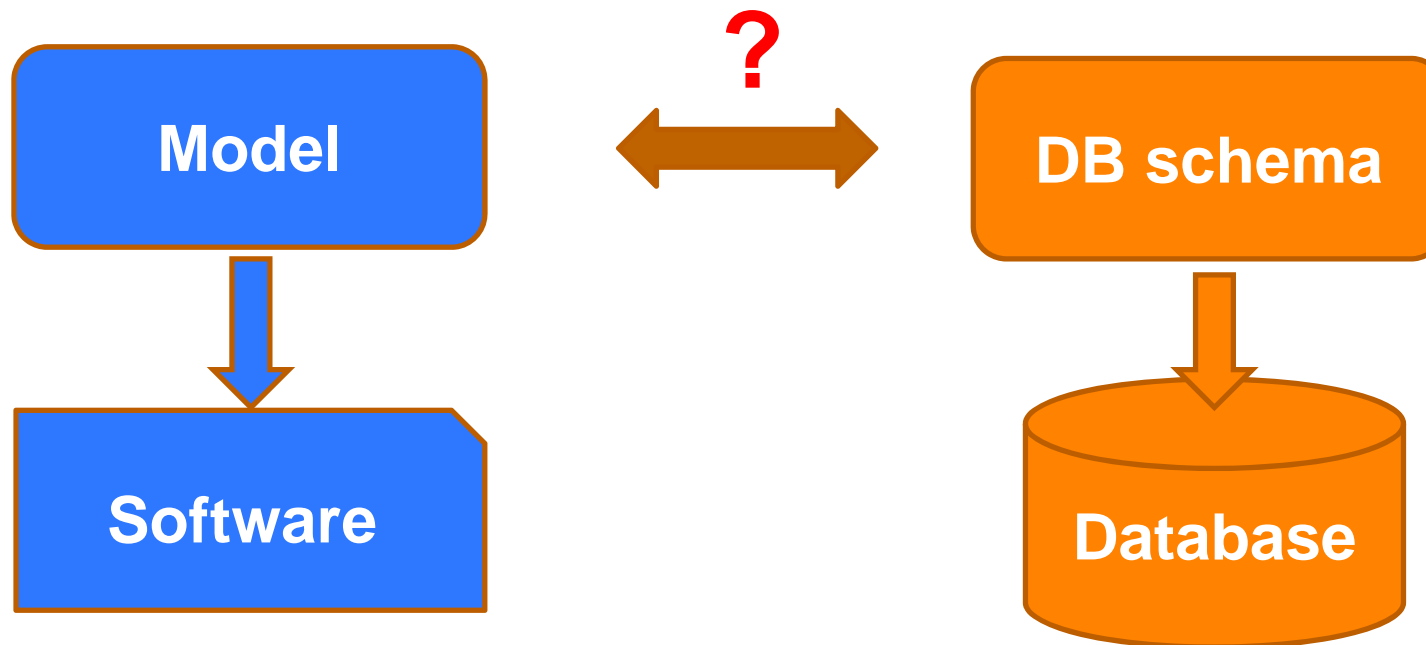
**PhD**

**Software Engineering**

**1987 – 1991**

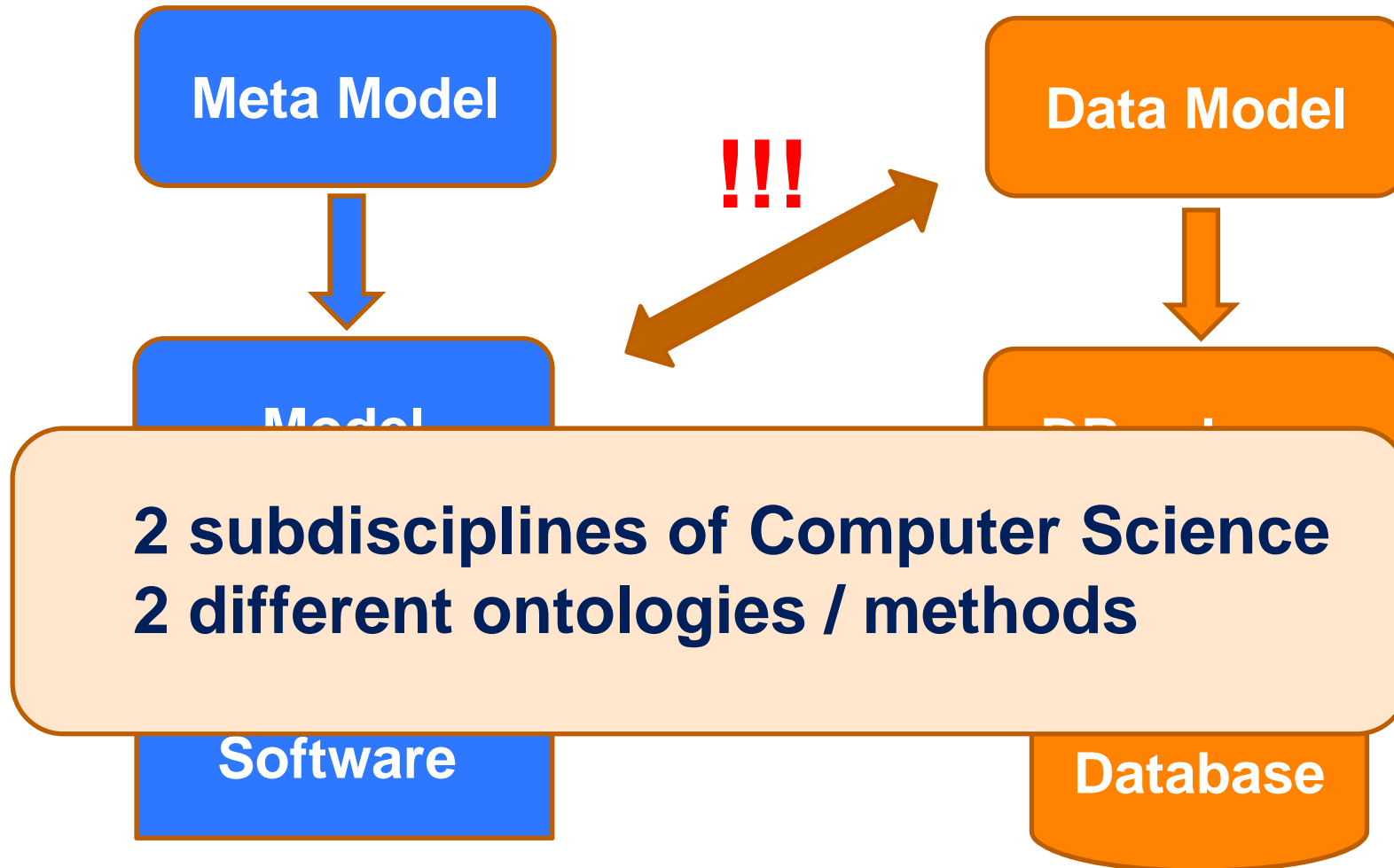
**PostDoc**

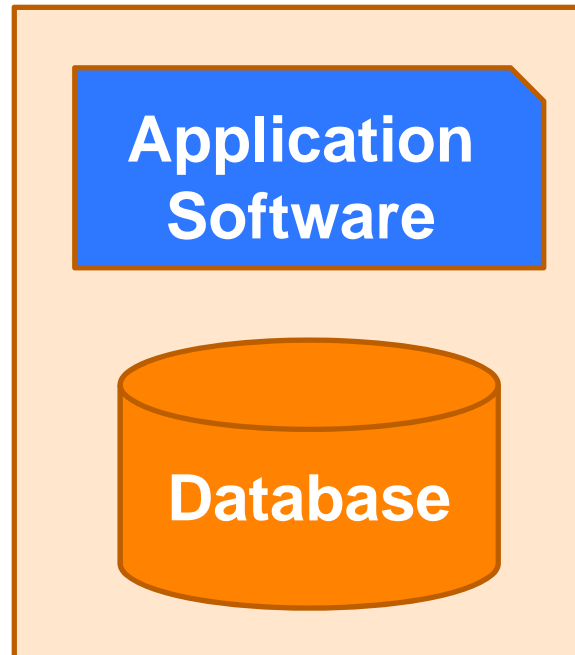
**Information Systems**



## Software Engineering

## Information Systems





## Multidisciplinarity

**Several different disciplines with different (disjoint) ontologies / methods**



**Universiteit Leiden**

**1991 – 1997**

**Chair**

**Software Engineering and Information Systems**



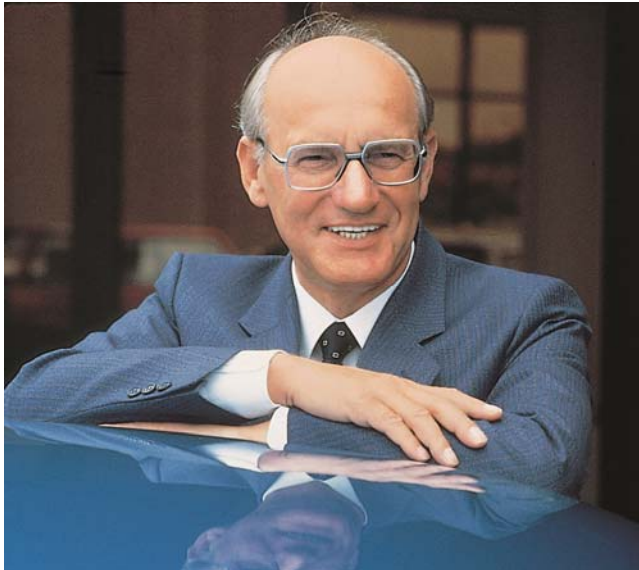
**PADERBORN  
UNIVERSITY**

**since 1997**

**Chair**

**Information Systems**

**Research Area: Software Engineering**



## Heinz Nixdorf (1925 – 1986) German Computer Pioneer

**Industry**



**University**



**HEINZ NIXDORF INSTITUT**  
UNIVERSITÄT PADERBORN

# **HEINZ NIXDORF INSTITUT**

## UNIVERSITÄT PADERBORN

- **seven endowed chairs**
  - **interdisciplinary approach**
    - **computer science**
    - **mechanical engineering**
    - **electrical engineering**
    - **economics**
    - **(philosophy)**



# HEINZ NIXDORF INSTITUT

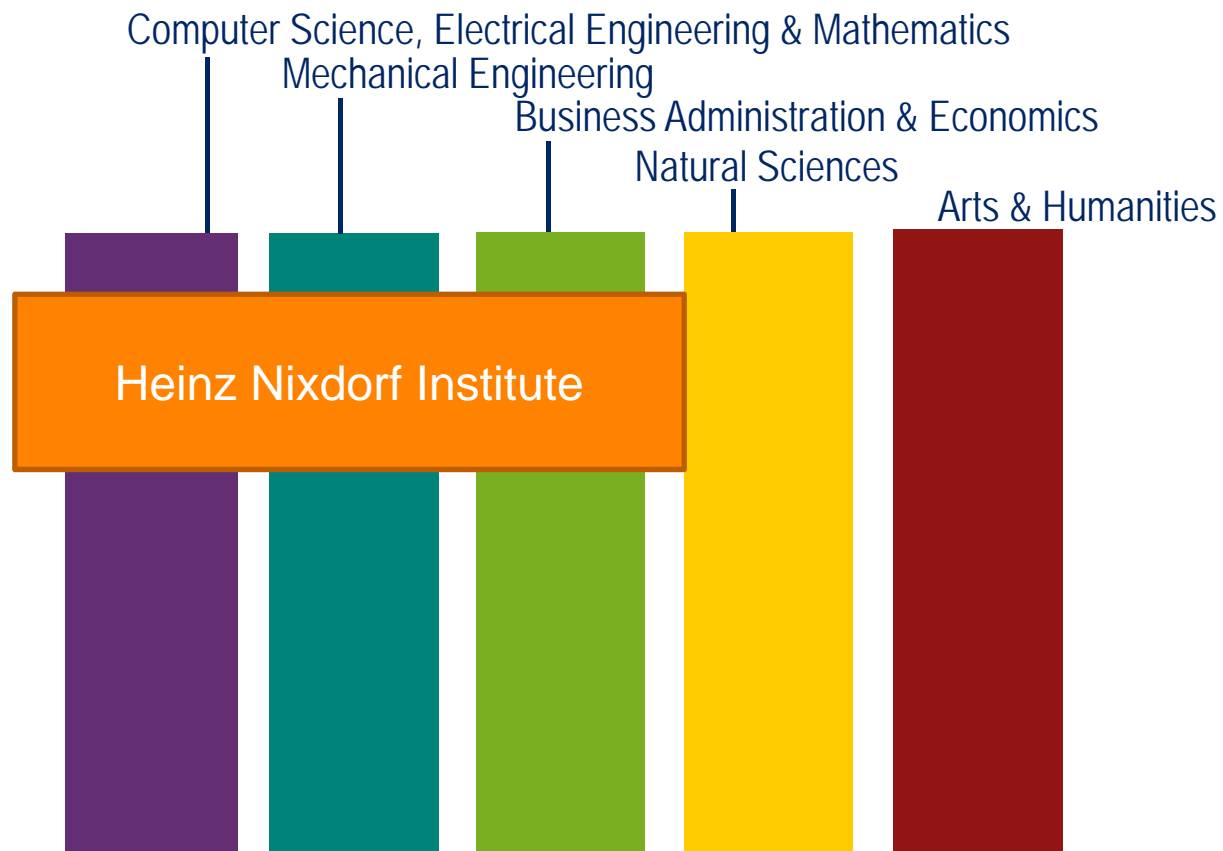
## UNIVERSITÄT PADERBORN

- **seven endowed chairs**
- **corporate identity (board, marketing)**
- **high appreciation / reputation / success**

**Interdisciplinarity**

**Several different disciplines with  
aligned ontologies / methods**

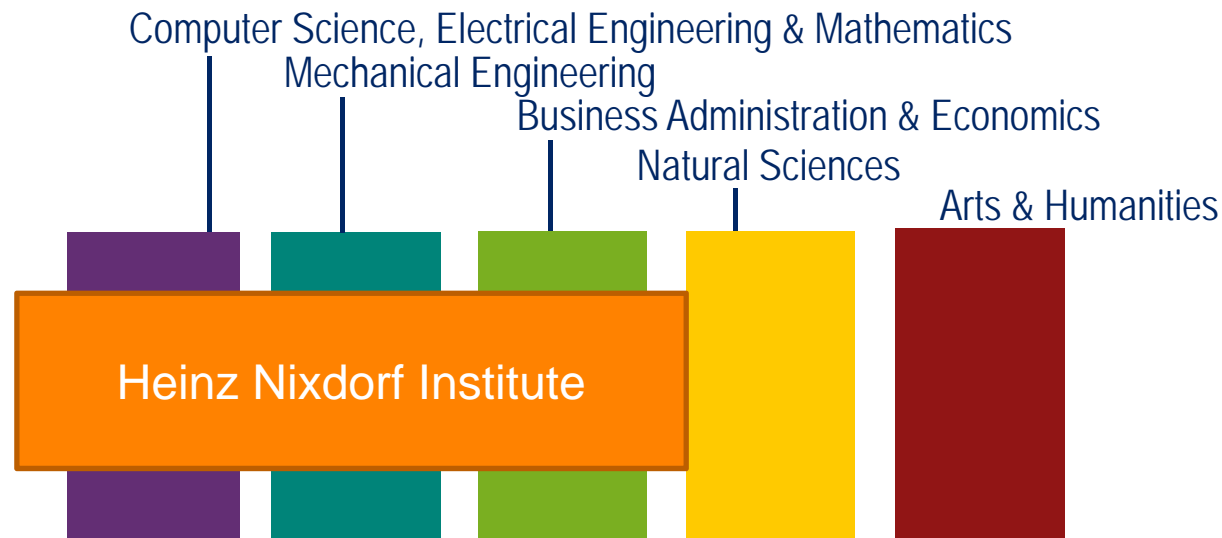
# faculty structure



**Any organization that designs a system (defined broadly) will produce a design whose structure is a copy of the organization's communication structure.**

**-- Melvyn Conway, 1967**

# faculty structure

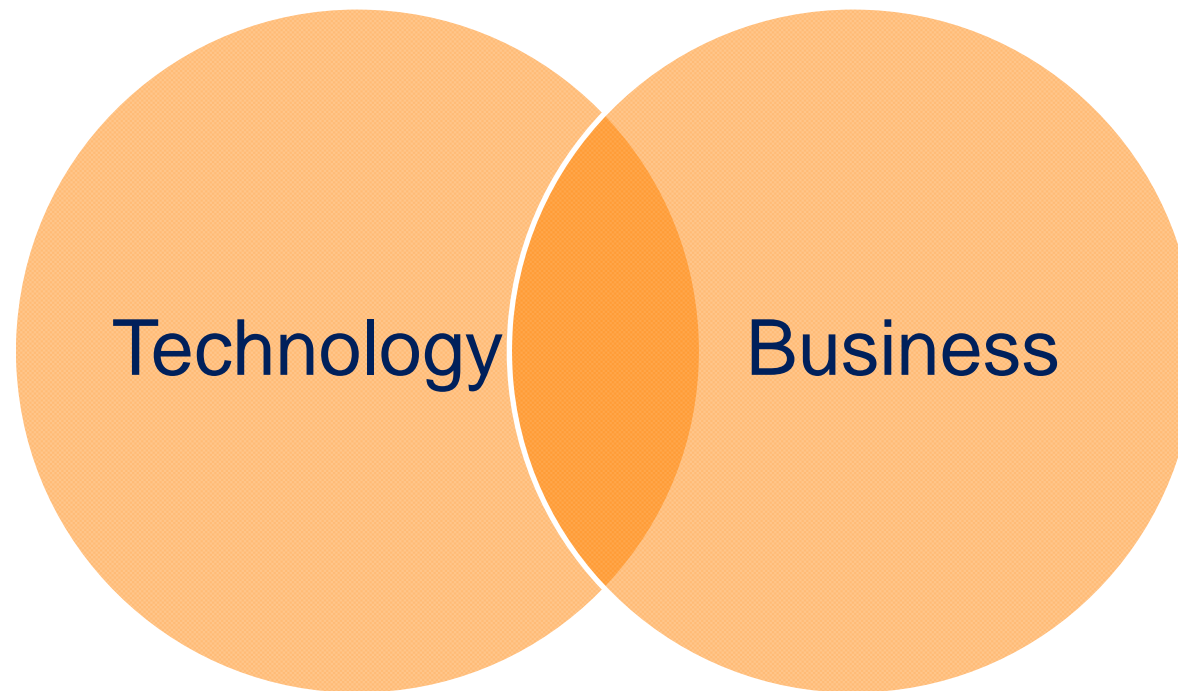


## Silo faculty structure

- low coupling
- individual goals
- discipline-oriented quality assessment

## Institute structure

- high coupling
- common goals
- goal-oriented quality assessment



## 4th industrial revolution: **Industry 4.0**



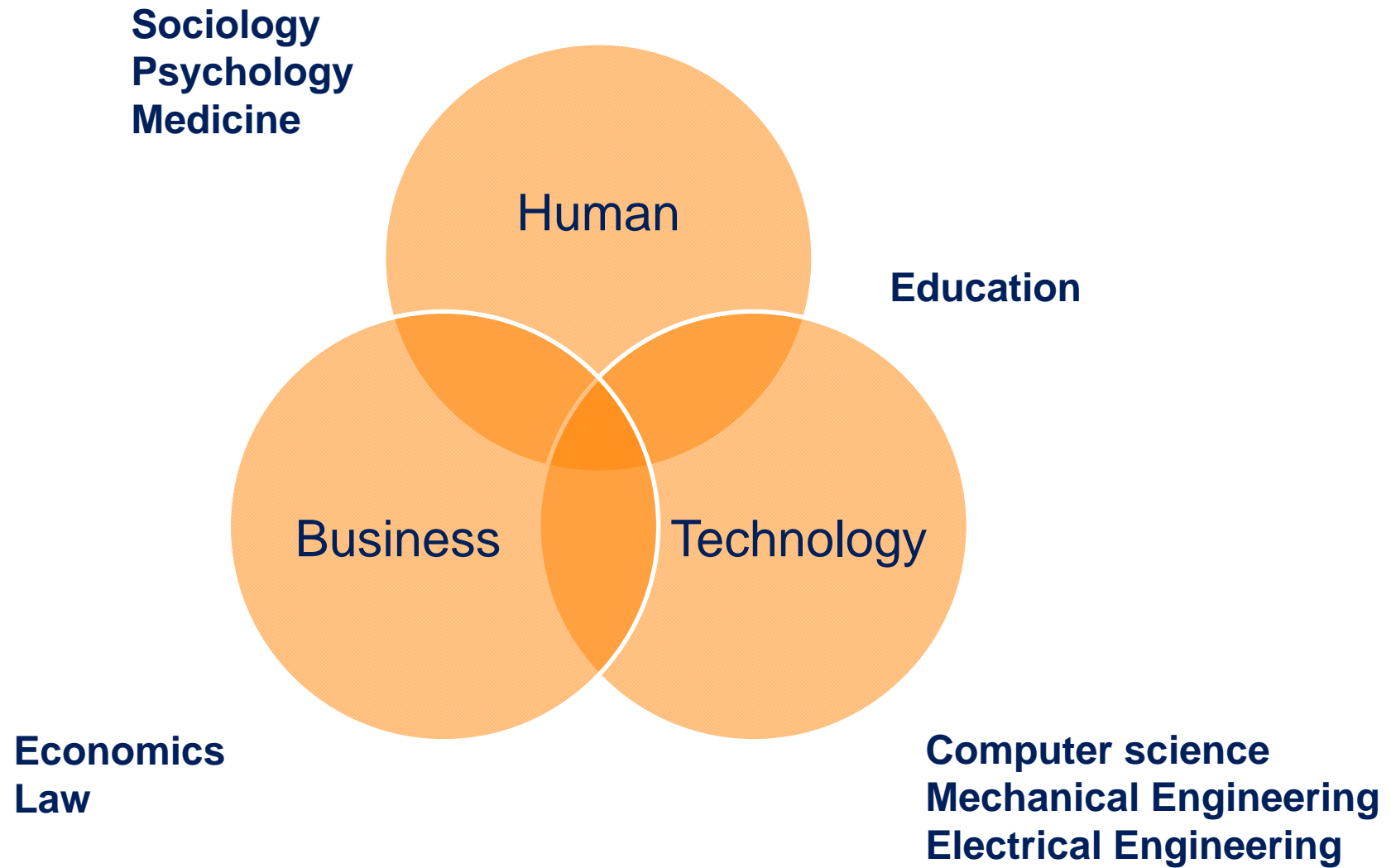
Source. Fraunhofer IPA)



Source: dpa

## **Cyber-Physical Social Systems (CPSS)**

### **Work 4.0**



## 4th industrial revolution: **Industry 4.0**



Source. Fraunhofer IPA)



Source: dpa

### **Work 4.0**

- **new role of employee**
- **impact on relationship between employer, unions, works council**



## 4th industrial revolution: **Industry 4.0**

### **Transdisciplinarity**

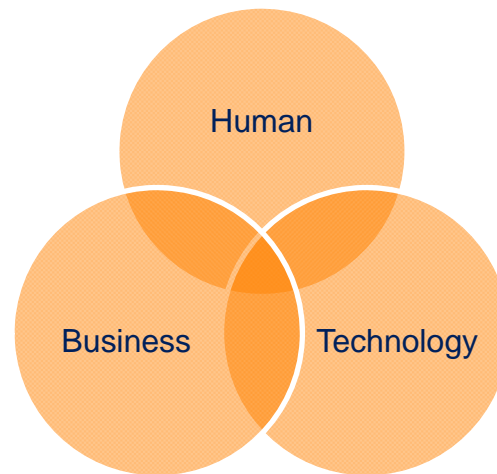
**Ontologies / methods from one or several disciplines are transferred / applied in another discipline / domain**

Source. Fraunhofer IPA)

Source: dpa

### **Work 4.0**

- **new role of employee**
- **impact on relationship between employer, unions, works council**



Mechanical Engineering  
Product Development  
Education  
Computer Science  
Software Engineering  
Process Engineering

## Joint PhD School Work 4.0

- 10 professors
- 10 PhD students
- 1 coordinator
- 4 years
- external partners  
(unions, IT networks)

## Universität Bielefeld

Sociology  
Industrial Psychology  
Computer Science  
Sensorics  
Robotics  
Neuro informatics

- **Board** (4 professors, 2 PhD students, 2 external partners)
- **PhD supervision**
  - direct supervisor
  - PhD students in his/her research group
  - regular meetings of PhD students (coordinator or self-organized)
  - regular meetings of whole consortium
  - advisory board (3 professors)
  - interdisciplinary research question
  - feedback from external partners
  - access to works councils / employees

**“In theory, theory and practice are the same. In practice, they are not.”**

**Anonymous**

## Pitfalls – Professor

- „takes“ the money
- integrates PhD student as „regular“ PhD student in his/her team
- leaves university
- not open to interdisciplinary work (time, fear, no reputation)

## **Pitfalls –**

### **PhD student**

- „takes“ the money
  - wants only a PhD
- is isolated in the research team of his/her supervisor
- leaves university
- not open to interdisciplinary work (time, fear, hard to publish, additional time for discussion with other PhD students)

## Pitfalls –

### Interdisciplinary work

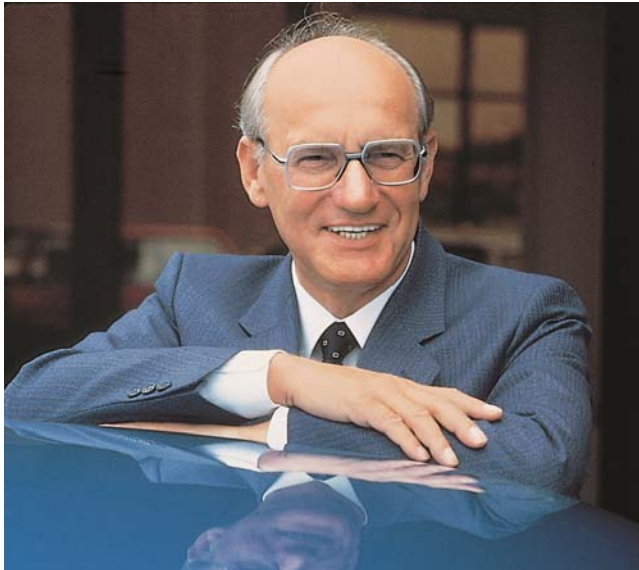
- discipline-specific research methods
  - analytical
  - constructive
  - empirical
- discipline-specific culture / publication methods
  - in-between, at-the-end
  - co-authors
  - journal, conference

## Remedies

- careful selection of team
  - professors
  - PhD students
- strong leadership
  - discussions / meetings (individual, group)
  - distribute/assign responsibilities
- incentives for interdisciplinary work
  - new quality criteria
  - appropriate publication means







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**Technology Transfer**

**PhD School Work 4.0**

# Topics of modern ICT systems

Software  
Engineering



Digital  
Transformation



Big Data  
Analytics



Security



Cloud  
Computing



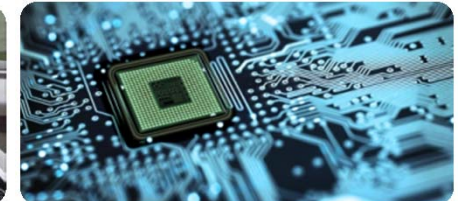
Mobile  
Applications



Cyber-Physical  
Systems



Embedded  
Systems Design



# Software Innovation Campus Paderborn



# Competence Centers

- *no technology silos, but strong cooperation*
- *no static structure, but agile and competent teams*

## Cloud & Mobile Systems

**Director  
Manager**

Prof. Dr. Holger Karl  
Dr. Simon Oberthür

## Cyber Physical Systems

**Director  
Manager**

Prof. Dr. Falko Dressler  
Dr. Bernd Kleinjohann

## Digital Business Innovation

**Director  
Manager**

Prof. Dr. Dennis Kundisch  
Dr. Stefan Sauer

## Smart Systems

**Director  
Manager**

Prof. Dr. Eyke Hüllermeier  
Dr. Gunnar Schomaker

## Software Engineering

**Director  
Manager**

Prof. Dr. Gregor Engels  
Dr. Stefan Sauer

## Benefits of SICP

- single entry point for industry
  - in particular for SMEs
- adequate interdisciplinary team of researchers for each project
- centralized experience (proposals, contracts, IPR, budgets, employments)
- higher visibility of university
- knowledge exchange

## Pitfalls

- **Professor**

- doesn't understand the benefits
- „can do everything“
- afraid of loosing visibility / reputation / money

- **PhD student**

- likes project work, forgets PhD

- **Research**

- soft border between research and development

## Remedies

- **Win-Win is the key!**
  - university, professor, Phd student
  - industry
- **long-standing relationships**
  - trust, appreciation
  - competence

# Conclusions

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- multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary work is needed to solve nowadays problems
- it needs additional effort and time
  - to cooperate in teams
  - to manage the people
- it is more risky
  - diverse backgrounds, expectations
  - unclear rewards
- it is more fun
  - broadens the horizon
  - greater impact

**No risk, no fun!**





INFORMATICS  
EUROPE

**SICP**

Software Innovation Campus Paderborn

**Thanks**

**(engels@upb.de)**