COLLEGE OF
INFORMATION
STUDIES

Existing Models and Inspiring New Networks-of-Networks:

Lessons from interdisciplinary networks at the University of Maryland

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About Me

Background

- Associate Professor in UMD's iSchool
- Research: privacy, security and ethics of new technologies

Why am I here?

- Director, Center for the Advanced Study of Communities & Information (CASCI)
- Associate Director, Human Computer Interaction Lab (HCIL)
- Primary organizer, privacy scholars network (networkedprivacy.com)
- Experience with international networks and collaborations
- Experience with multiple NSF grants

Network of Network Characteristics

- International engagement integral to success of activities
- Aligned mission and goals among the participating networks
- Leveraged resources across networks for mutual benefit
- Professional skills and global research perspectives developed
- Protocols, activities, products developed that reduce barriers to international collaboration

My current networks

Center for the Advanced Study of Communities and Information

Human-Computer Interaction Lab

PERVADE

Networked Privacy

https://casci.umd.edu/

CASCI facilitates research and education that advances our understanding of the technology, information, and organization approaches needed to realize the potential of 21st century communities to support learning, facilitate innovation, transform science and scholarship, promote economic development, and enhance individual and civic well-being.

CASCI features:

- Bi-weekly reading group
- Bi-weekly talks
- Paper clinics
- Cross-campus networking

The Human-Computer Interaction Lab (HCIL; https://hcil.umd.edu/) has a long, rich history of transforming the experience people have with new technologies. We are the oldest HCI lab in the U.S., celebrating 36 years in 2019. HCIL transforms the way people interact with technology through interactive and user-centered design.

Lab features:

- Weekly brownbag lunch & talk
- HCIL symposium (annual)
- Paper clinics
- Alumni and other social events

Research networks as a "collaboratory"

PERVADE
PERVASIVE DATA ETHICS
for computational research

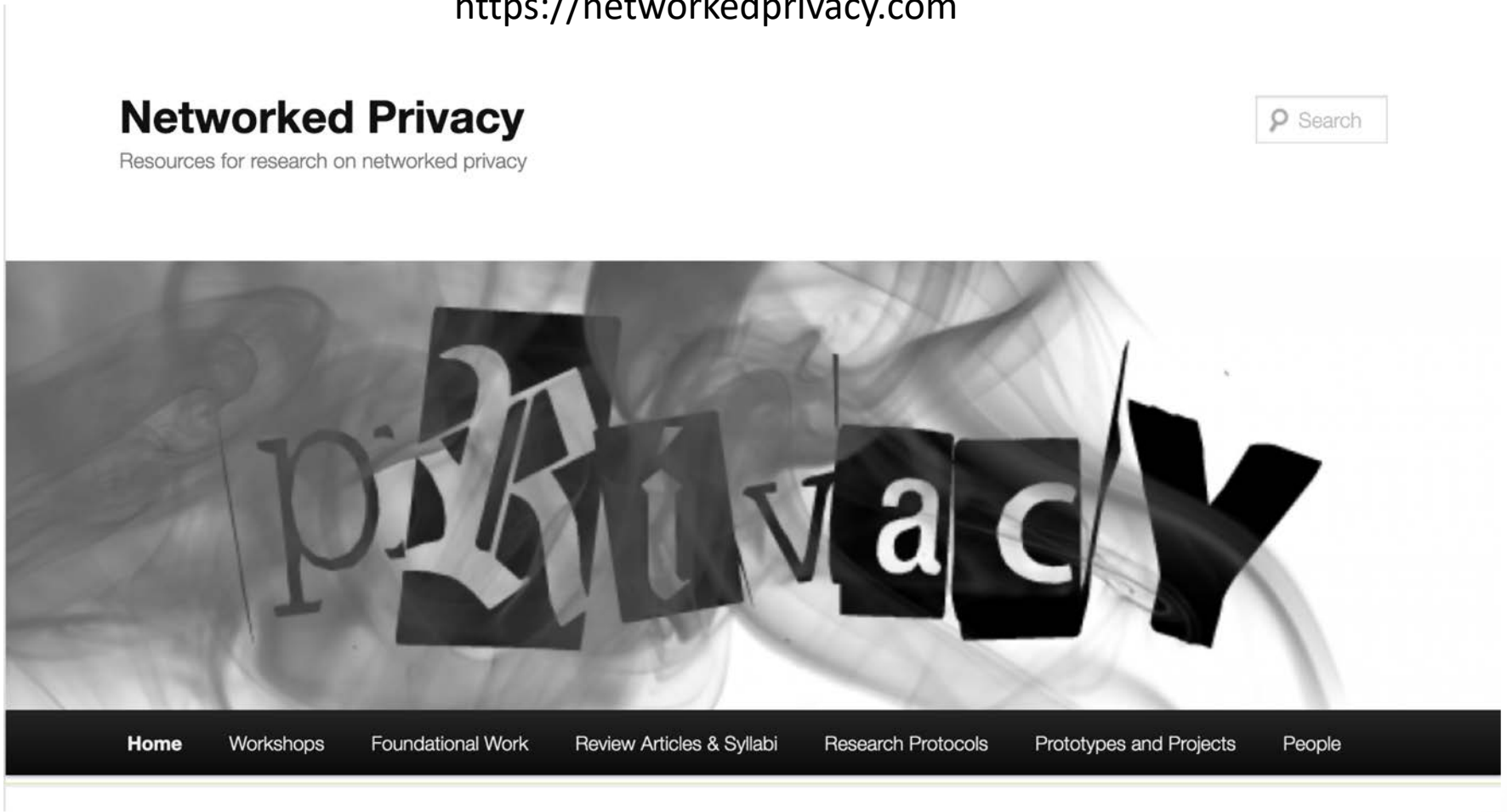
What is PERVADE?

PERVADE is an interdisciplinary collaboration between seven researchers at six institutions. We have a four-year grant from the NSF for this project (2017-2021).

https://pervade.umd.edu

Privacy Researchers Network

https://networkedprivacy.com



Network features: Conference Workshops | Facebook page | listserv

Lessons learned: *Your network's goals must be clearly articulated and widely shared.*

A network should have a mission statement—its purpose for existing. Without one, the network lacks a guide for what opportunities to pursue and what direction to move.

Example mission statement:
The Center for the Advanced Study of Communities and Information (CASCI) is a multidisciplinary research network, based at University of Maryland. CASCI exists to facilitate research and education that advances our understanding of the technology, information, and organization approaches needed to realize the potential of 21st century communities to support learning, facilitate innovation, transform science and scholarship, promote economic development, and enhance individual and civic well-being.

Lessons learned: *Sustained engagement requires some kind of value-add for network members.*

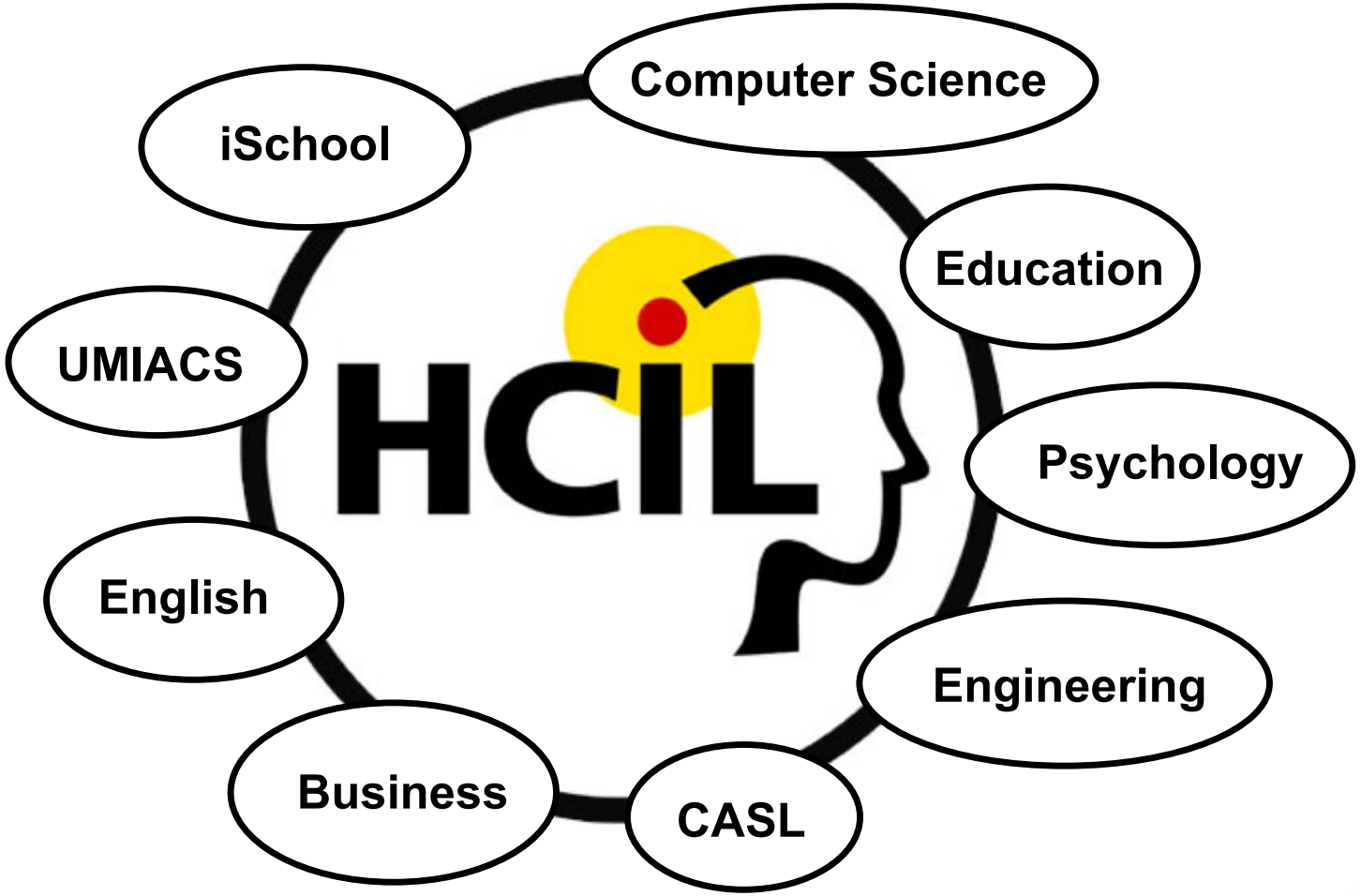
Q: What constitutes value?

A: Lots of things, including:

- Prestige
- Research updates
- Research opportunities
- Networking/friendship
- And so on…

Lessons learned: *Face-to-face interactions among network members is best way to build a cohesive group.*

Lessons learned: *Interdisciplinary problems require interdisciplinary solutions.*



Lessons learned: *International problems require international solutions—but that's much easier said than done.*

Challenges to international networks:

- Value/weight placed on goals may vary.
- Research by network members in different countries may be incentivized differently.
- Network members in different countries may have different barriers to conducting research.
- Language barriers (e.g., when another language doesn't have a word for a concept you want to measure)
- Policy differences in different countries.
- Coordinating funding across multiple countries is **hard.**

Lessons learned: *Without a dedicated (and competent) manager/admin, **everything** becomes much harder.*