Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 1

András Sebestyén Szőllősy
Hungarian Association for Applied Linguistics & Language Teaching
a.s.szollosy@gmail.com

Gábor Vitályos
Vitályos Consuting, Budapest, Hungary
consulting@vitalyos.hu

Motivation of our research -1

"Although more and more people use interactive electronic contents/services in Internet as everyday tools to manage their work, we are flooded by confused, untrustworthy, unusable contents/services, witch don't satisfy our native requirements of an everyday tool."

"*Recent professional internet portals look like descendants of **game machines**, instead of the electronic descendants of e.g. **professional handbooks**."*

Our analysis: the reason is the lack of sw technologies and methodologies in:

B) Ergonomics: Easy to perceive and manipulate. Multimedia, 3D, virtual reality.

A) Semantics: What is the able-minded, didactic, correct speech in the Internet?

C) Security: mainly the **authenticity feeling**. My documents, data, things are where I think them to be. The service does what & when I think it to do.

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 3/18

Motivation of our research (Example of the nonsense-1)

See this brave home page of common interest, containing archives of some training presentations:

Motivation of our research (Example of the nonsense-1)

I see this home page, and I'm in doubt:

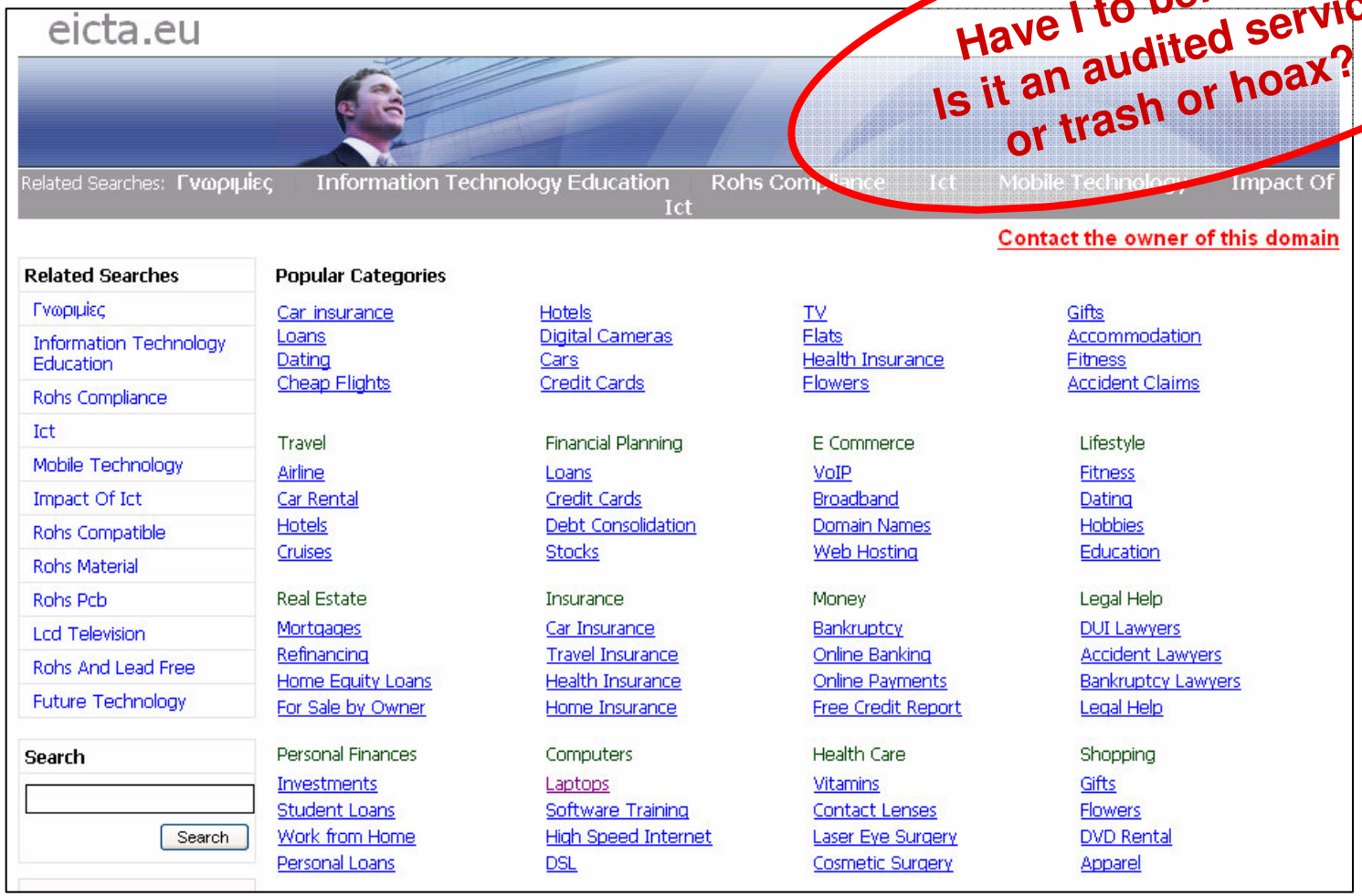
- What is the authorization sheet at the upper tight corner for? (What if I log in, and what if not?)
- What is the structure of what I see? What is the main content table: the green one at the lower left, the horizontal bar, the lower right list, some combination of these, or something else?
- What is the creation date of the documents?
- Who is the author, or the owner of the documents?
- May I trust, they will be there tomorrow?
- Am I authorized to download to my computer?
- If I'm, how to do it? One by one, using right click?
- What is their expiration date? Or they are already expired?

Don't make me neither riddle solving nor reading huge help!

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 5/18

Motivation of our research (Example of the nonsense-2)

See next page, at random, from EU portals:



Have I to believe it?
Is it an audited service,
or trash or hoax?

Motivation of our research (Example of the nonsense-2)

I'm in doubt, as was in the previous case:

Have I to believe it?
Is it an audited service,
or trash or hoax?

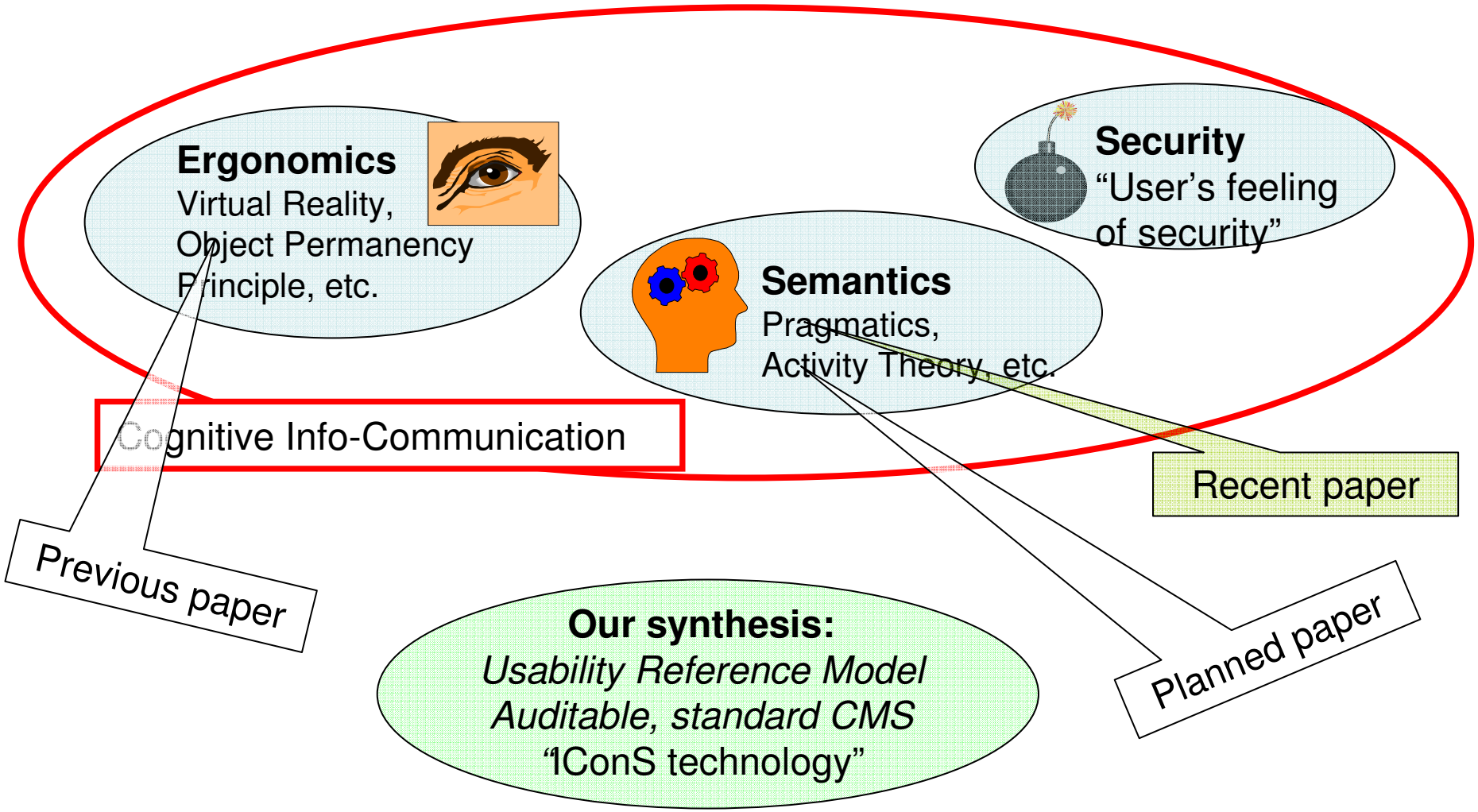
–What is abbreviated by the domain name?
–What does this content do?
–What can I search, and were?
–What I see? Is it a content table of something? Encyclopedia? A home pages reference collection? Firm titles? Service providers?
–Is there anybody to update all that? Will this site be there tomorrow?

We must discover what we see via the methodology of the experimental physics: hitting and swearing (in the ICT we say is as 'try & fail').

Try it!

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 7/18

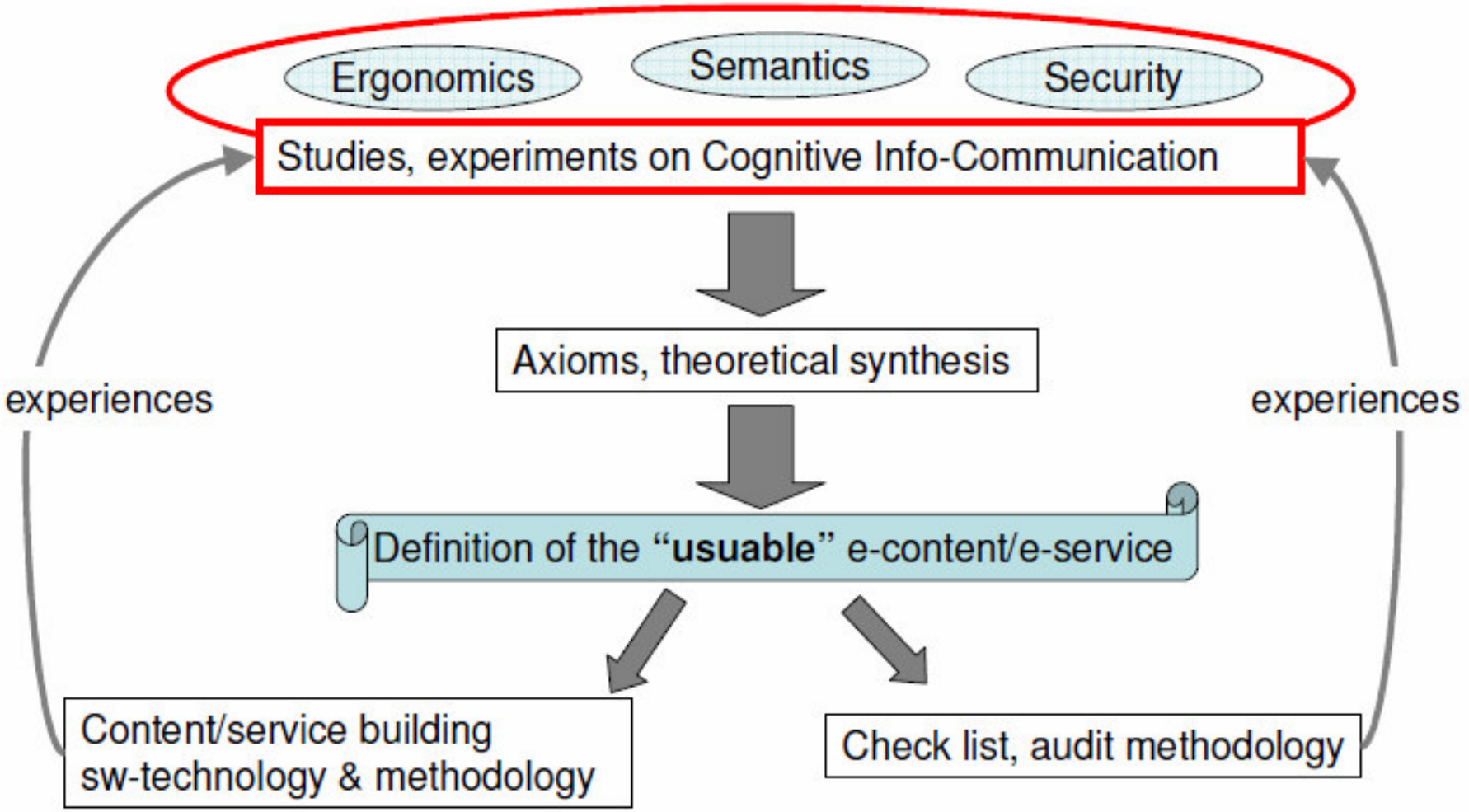
Philosophy of our research - 1



The behavior of the virtual objects & actors mustn't essentially differ from that of the real ones

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 8/18

Philosophy of our research - 2



Philosophy of our research – 3
The ‘book’ metaphor

What the usability standard must be like?

Consider the **book** as example: it has some standard facilities:

- Pages with spine
- Standard pages: cover, title, imprint
- page numbering
- Chapters mainly in tree structure
- Chapter naming & numbering
- Content table with page numbers
- Index with page numbers

These are ‘**de facto cultural standards**’: all of us can use every book without riddle solving. **It is very independent from that we understand the content of the book or not.**

The **book** is an icon of the professional content technology.

Our model, the **Usability Reference Model** gives ‘**de facto cultural standards**’ for the professional e-contents/e-services.

A usable e-contents/services must be as standard as **books** are.

Philosophy of our research - 4

An axiomatic system is a theoretical construction. It is very difficult to demonstrate the **necessity** and the **function** of an axiom by **itself**.

The axiomatic system is mainly based on the constructor's **technical intuition**, and **functions as a whole**.

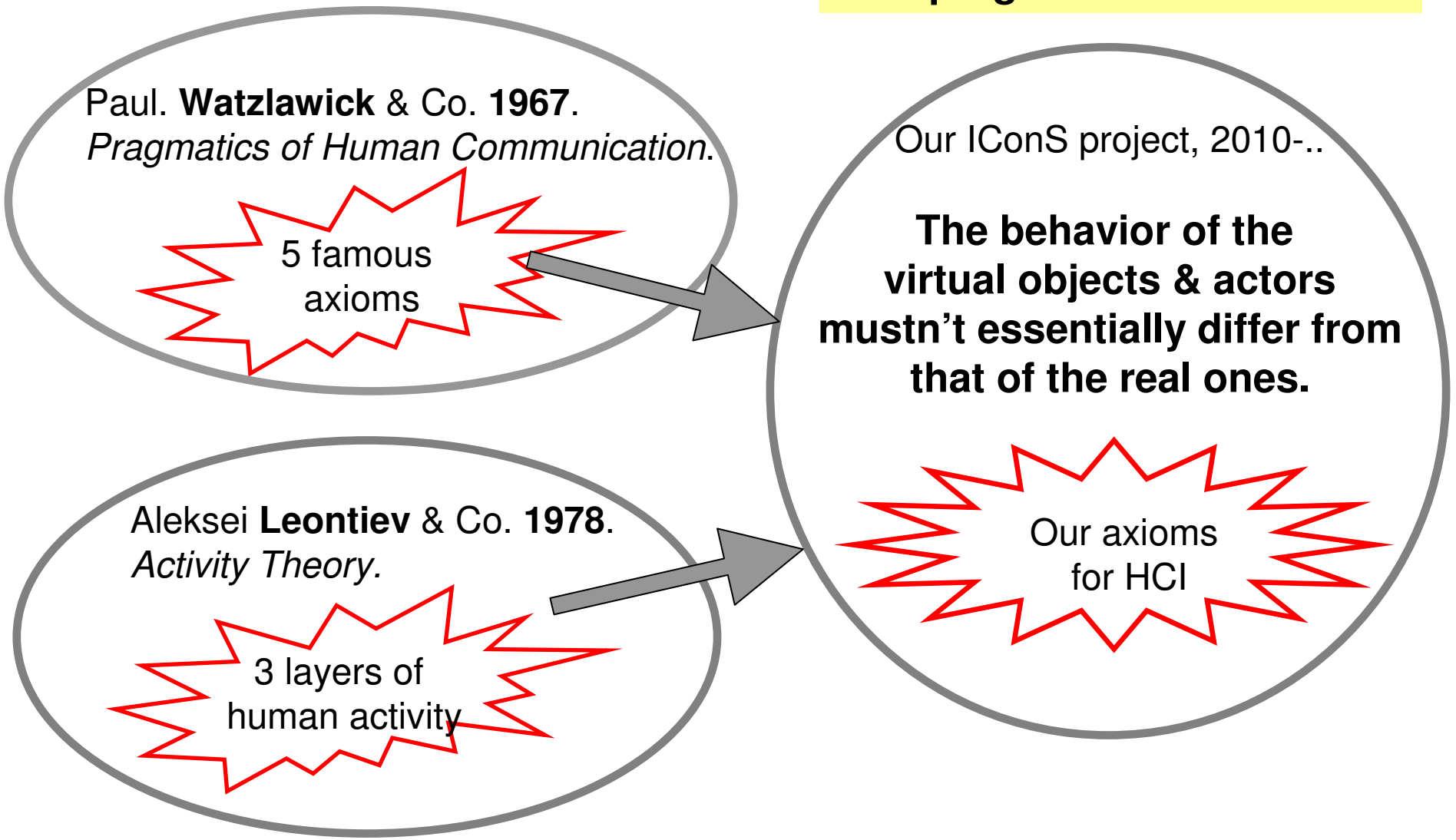
The **user** mustn't deal with and **understand the axioms**.

- The **CMS** (the Content/service Management Systems) sw-technologies must **based** on **them**.
- The **sw-engineers**, the experts of the CMS, and the **auditors** must understand **them**.

The axioms often must be definitions at the same time.

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 11/18

The pragmatics and the HCI



The 0th axiom on the 'scope'

Differentiating the objects and the actors.

We don't communicate with our **objects** or their **virtual space** - we operate on them instead. We communicate with **actors**.

- The **objects** are in our virtual space, some of them we see in the screen. They are the entities of our privacy.
- The **actors** must introduce themselves for us to be familiar in our virtual space. The e-mail clients are actors, generally not introduced.

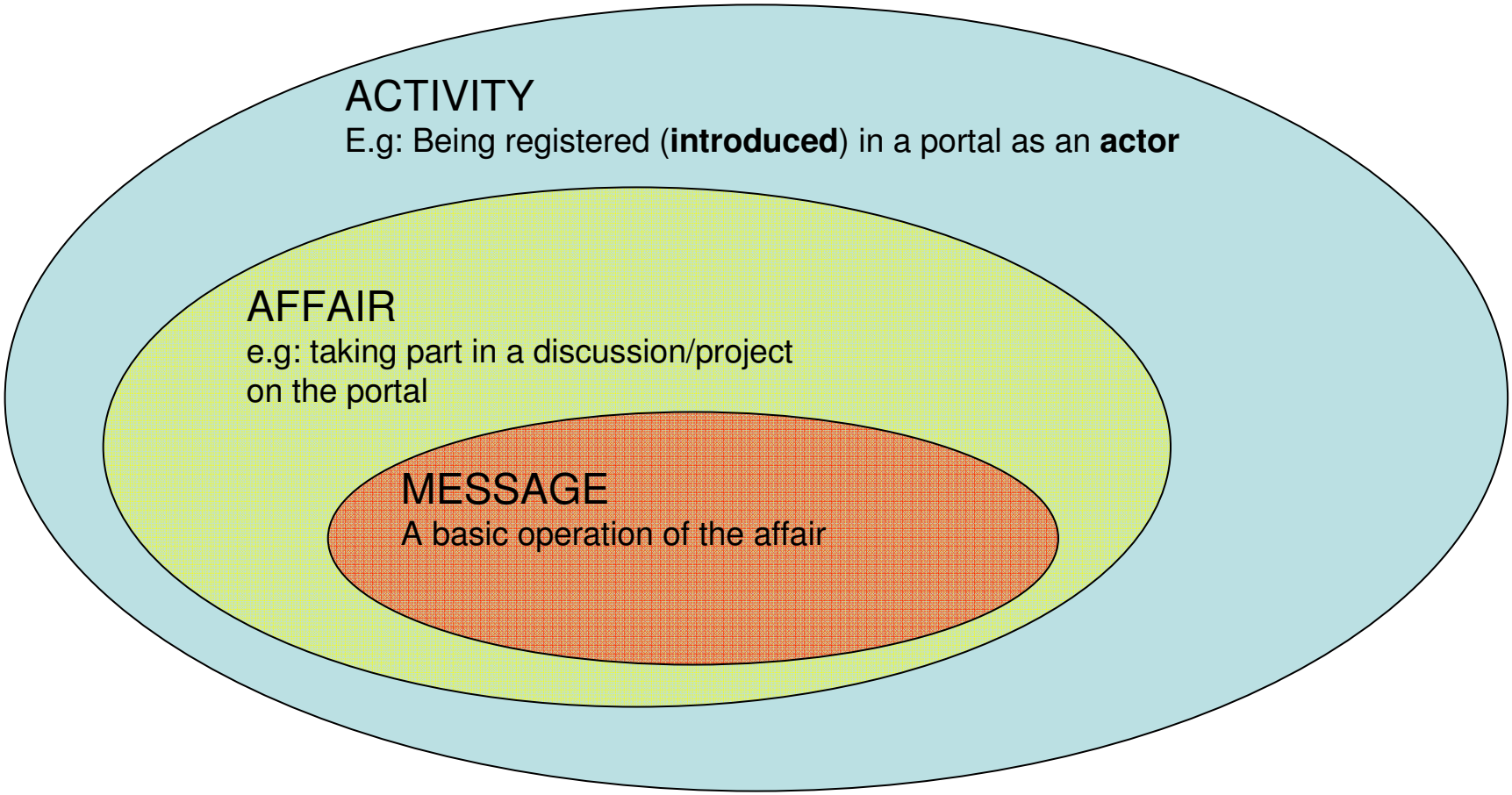
Example-1: **the search engine** in a portal is an actor? Basically not: it is a widget to search objects in the portal (it is our virtual space while we use the portal). But can be actor, if it introduces itself.

Example-2: the **Google engine** is an actor? Practically yes, but without introducing.

We face the lack of the thought-out introducing mechanisms in the internet.

The 1st axiom set on ‘affairs and actors’

Definitions



The 1st axiom set on ‘affairs and actors’ - 2

Defines the connection between actors, affairs and the objects.

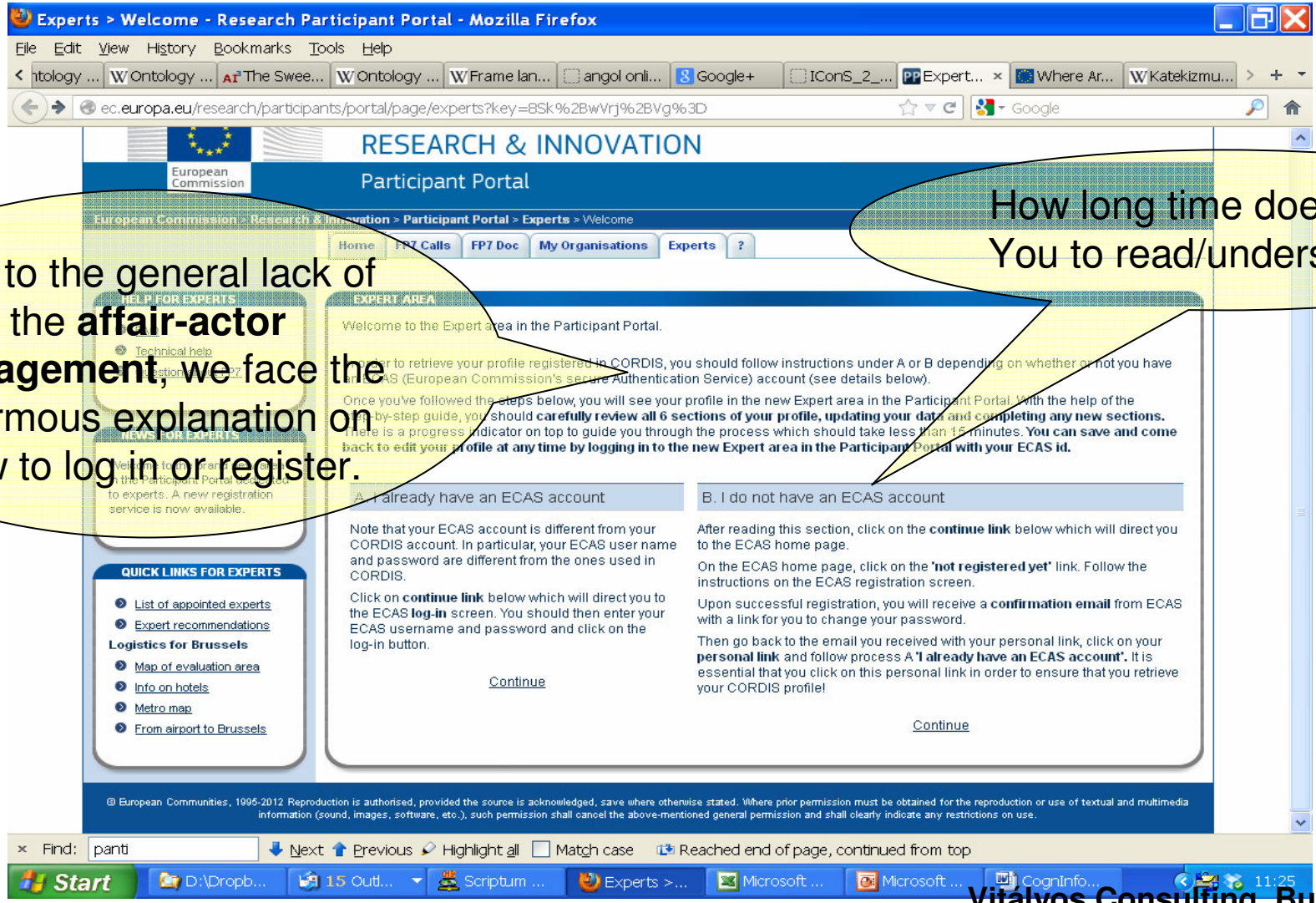
1.1) Actors, activities, affairs and messages are *objects* in the user’s virtual space.
Consequently, each of them and all *meta-information* attached to them
must be identifiable on the screen.
…
1.5) Activities and affairs must have managers. A manager is an **actor**.
S/he is generally the system administrator of the portal.
The manager of an affair may generally be the chairman of the discussion
or the project manager.
…
1.7) The activity has to be created and ended,
the affair has to be opened and closed by its manager.

NB: These kind of formal regulation are well known
- inside the operating systems between software agents, as “inter-process-communication”,
- between machines, sites as the innumerable network protocols ,
-But not in the CHI, between e-service and the human clients.

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 15/18

The 1st axiom set on ‘affairs and actors’ - 3

Example: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/experts?key=8Sk%2BwVrj%2BVg%3D



Due to the general lack of the **affair-actor management**, we face the enormous explanation on how to log in or register.

How long time does it take You to read/understand it?

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 16/18

The 1st axiom set on ‘affairs and actors’ - 4

Example, continued: clicked on the continue button at the previous screen:

Why have I to tell this before log in?
For the general lack of the actor identification. See 1.1) axiom.

See the comment sheet.

Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 17/18

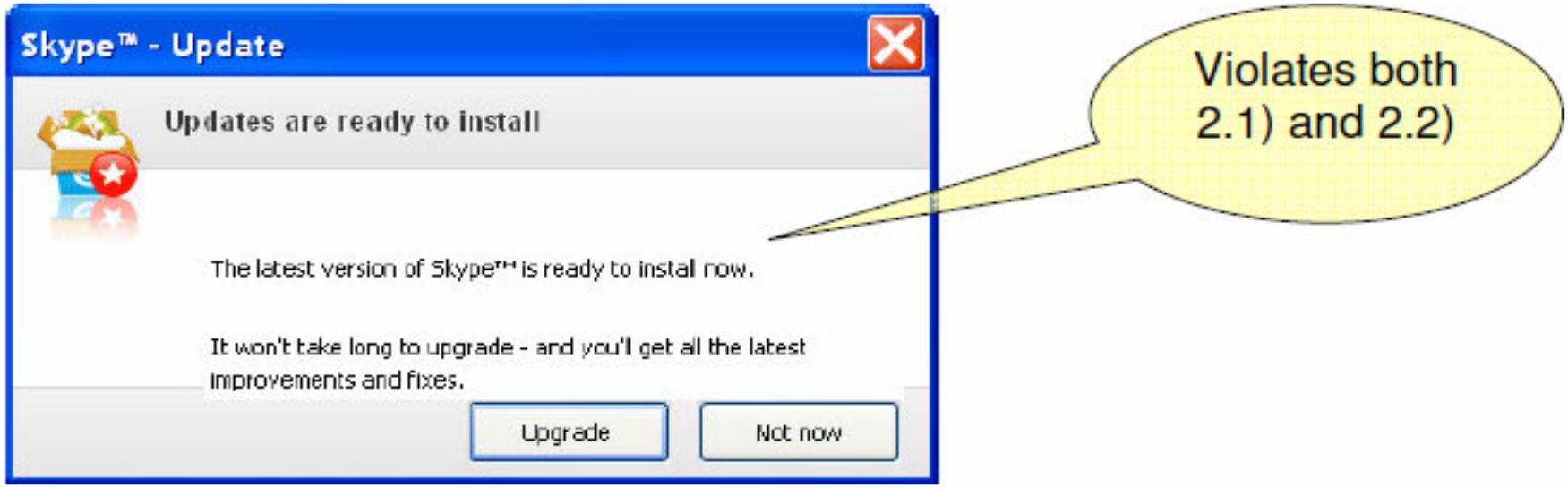
The 2nd axiom set on the 'Interruptions'

Nobody likes to be interrupted while working.

2.1) A message must be able
- to appear **immediately** on the screen or
- to be displayed for **later reading**.

2.2) A message must not cover the work area, the center of the screen at its **immediate appearance**.

We face numberless ill-mannered appearance. E.g:



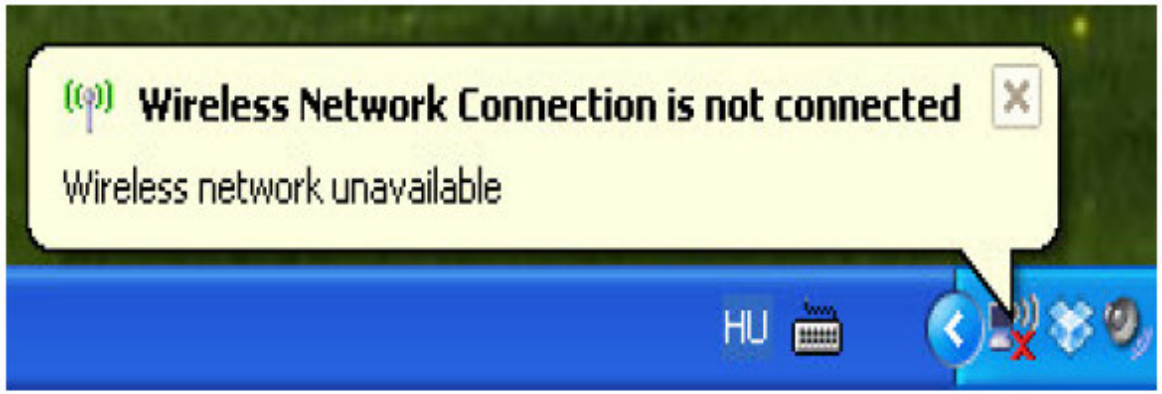
Pragmatics in the Usabilty discipline - 18/18

The 3rd axiom set on the 'Relations'

Message brings **metai-nformation** on the relation between sender/receiver.

3.1) Meta-information of relations is to be obviously coded in the header of the message.
It must be seen without a deeper analysis of the message text.
3.2) Blocking messages must appear immediately.

There are a lot of type of the meta-information. See the comment sheet..



A blocking message. (Being blocking, and the blocked affairs are meta-information.)
Without affair manager we can not see what affairs are blocked. We could work with other affairs.
We can find out, **but can not see.** Violates the 3.1)