

Case research as a methodology for industrial networks: a realist apologia.



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Case Research As A Methodology For Industrial Networks: A Realist Apologia

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Abstract

Researchers most often employ a form of case research methodology when carrying out research into industrial networks. Previously the basis for this choice has rested on the obvious common sense match between case research and the kinds of situations that industrial network researchers have chosen to study. The paper describes four different epistemological orientations; positivism, constructivism, conventionalism and realism. It is argued that only realism has properties which ensure a match with the particular characteristics of case research and thus provide a justification for case base knowledge claims. The implications of, and constraints on, each of the other epistemological orientations for case research are described and, finally, the ramifications of realist based case research for programmes of research on industrial networks are described.

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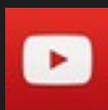
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