

Has informatics brought a new style of scientific thinking?  
Do we need a new style of thinking?

Call for Papers for an Open Workshop  
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In his *“Styles of Scientific Thinking in the European Tradition”*, A.C. Crombie identifies six different styles of scientific thinking in the European tradition – rooted at the ancient Greek science, best known through the teachings of Socrates. *“A scientific style ... defined the questions to be put within that subject-matter and that style, and determined the acceptable answers. A style opened certain routes of inquiry and closed others”* – he states. Has informatics opened new routes in that sense, and maybe closed other ones? No matter that the many answers to this question are interesting; the important issue is to pose this and similar questions. Informatics is still practiced in a more or less “naïve” manner, driven directly by purely technological and economic considerations. However, science is free, thanks to its pioneers such as Galileo, to be virtually any and everything – except naïve. It is *“committed to truth,”* as Crombie says.

Most of the six styles identified by Crombie (postulation, experimental argument, hypothetical modelling, taxonomy, probabilistic and statistical analysis, and historical derivation) are operational in the every day practice of informatics. However, we do not know which combination(s?) we use, which new emphases have been set and which totally new elements have arisen.

Who is able to answer such questions? Computer scientists alone can hardly do this. *“Societies and situations nearest to us in time and familiarity may indeed be the least enlightening...”* – says Crombie. It is for this reason that we wish to call for an open, interdisciplinary workshop, one where the style of thinking in informatics is enlightened from as many points of views as possible.

Moreover, we are not only interested in identifying the state of the art. *“One main reason for studying history is to understand ourselves and our present world”* – says Crombie. The workshop also raises the question whether we need a new style of thinking. Not in order to make informatics more effective; this might or might not be a by-product. But in order to better understand our present and to shape our future. If our future is only a repetition of the old styles then it isn't any future.