



*Graduate School of Education  
Department of Library and Information Studies*

**SEMINAR SERIES  
SPRING 2016**

*We welcome all GSE faculty and students!*



**Dr. Jenna Hartel**

University of Toronto

**Pictorial Metaphors for Information**

**Abstract**

The iSquare Research Program is an arts-informed, visual study in which people answer the question “What is information?” in the form of a compact line drawing, coined an “iSquare” (Hartel, 2014a). Since 2011, more than 2,000 iSquares have been collected from diverse academic disciplines and from around the world. In this presentation, Dr. Jenna Hartel will provide an overview of the iSquare project and report recent insights into the *pictorial metaphors* associated with information. Eight common pictorial metaphors for information that appear in the iSquare corpus—earth, web, tree, light bulb, box, cloud, fishing/mining, and eye—will be displayed and explicated imaginatively. The talk will also address the potentials of arts-informed, visual research for social scientific inquiry and will note implications of graphical elicitation techniques for research, education (Hartel, 2014b), and practice in information studies and beyond.



*Pictorial metaphors* are visual devices that invoke a familiar source domain to illuminate the qualities of a more abstract target domain (in this case, information). Five source domains often used to characterize information are shown above as earth, web, tree, cloud, and box.

**Biography**

Dr. Jenna Hartel is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Information, University of Toronto. Since the beginning of her academic career she has believed that visual methods are powerful tools for research and she has taken steps to introduce them into the field of information science. Dr. Hartel has won the Association for Library and Information Science methodology award for a paper on photographic methods; published the first methodological paper on visual methods in *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* (Hartel & Thomson, 2011); hosted and presented on many panels about visual methods at international conferences; and taught classes on visual methods at the Faculty of Information, University of Toronto. Dr. Hartel is the creator of iSquare Research Program and leader of the iSquare Research Team. She has spear-headed the collection of more than 2,000 drawings of information from twelve countries and numerous academic disciplines.

**Tuesday, April 26, 2016 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. 200G Baldy Hall**