Doing CSCW Research: Paradigm, Methods, Techniques

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Outline

- CSCW – the two strands – North American vs. European CSCW
- Quantitative vs Qualitative
- Methods and techniques
- Case studies
Computer Supported Cooperative Work

- (C(S(C(W))))
- An umbrella discipline, with elements from Sociology, Social Psychology, Human Computer Interaction, Computer Science, Organisational Science and so on.

- Some overlap with:
  - Information Systems
  - CMC(Computer Mediated Communication)
CSCW Background

- First time CSCW was mentioned – 1988-Irene Greif
- North American CSCW - a research field focused on the role of the computer in group work - engineering orientation; the concept of groupware;
- European CSCW - influenced by the trade union movement; aimed to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework; focused on worker empowerment
European CSCW

- approach to technology development in which ethnographic and other forms of in-depth workplace studies play an essential and proactive role.

- focus on anticipating possible organizational and social advantages or disadvantages of some already existing technology (Schmidt & Bannon 2013)

- Based on philosophical approaches (e.g., Heidegger’s) and Activity Theory.
Quantitative methods

- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Using pre-existing data
- Conducting pilot studies
- Conducting an experiment
Qualitative research methods

- Ethnography
- Narrative
- Phenomenological
- Grounded Theory
- Case Study

(for details, see Chapter 4 in Creswell, J. W. (2007) Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches, 2nd ed, Sage Publications; also slides)
Methodology

- Quantitative vs qualitative
- Mixed methods

- Data collection vs data analysis

- Analytic frameworks:
  - Communication lens (CMC)
  - Practice lens
  - Social Network Analysis
Ethnographic research
vs. case studies

Techniques for data collection:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Document analysis
- Shadowing
- Diaries

- “Ethnography inspired”
Writing up (data analysis)

- Thematic analysis
- Vignettes
- A day in the life
- Follow the actor/follow the artefact
Examples