

## CSCW in work contexts

Bowers & Martin (1999): *Informing Collaborative Information Visualisation*  
Clement & Wagner (1995): *Fragmented Exchange: Disarticulation...*

### How are social worlds of work to be understood within the scope of technological supporting applications?

The two texts of today are approaching different work settings empirically to gain insights into the character of “real world” cooperation and communication. Both texts are concerned with understanding *what* kind of features of work that are to be supported by technology and *how* within cooperative work settings. To a certain degree the texts highlight how constrained accessibility is sometimes favorable for (cooperation to happen). Focus on:

*Social* support/dis-support of cooperation

Technological/artifact support of cooperation

**Bowers & Martin:** The conduct of an ethnographic study led Bowers and Martin to an analysis of how “real world” **communication** in conjunction with (or supported by) **visualized information** plays out within an ambulance control center in North England. The authors accentuate that an important element of their study is the focus on (the **spatial** distribution of) ‘information displays’ in terms of understanding **information visualization** *and* in term of understanding how information displays give rise to “interaction in the dual sense that (i) they enable a user to interact with the information displayed, an (ii) such human-computer interaction can be publicly available to ‘third party’“ (p. 326), which again makes it possible to interact with either the user or the display (ibid.).

### Other Keywords:

- **Awareness** of the conduct of others' work in **Collaborative Virtual Environments**. Def. p. 322: Layers of seeing, at-a-glance perception.
- **Time/space** -> DISCUSSION why is it important to bring about these two concept within this text. See p. 323-324. Also, discussion about why these concepts are important within the field of CSCW.

**Clement and Wagner:** With an offspring in four different work settings / organizations Clement & Wagner use the concepts of **articulation** and **disarticulation** to argue for the value of taking "**real world**" **communication** into account when designing CSCW-applications. The authors plead for understanding the **locale** and **regionalized** characteristic of real world communication and cooperation in that such characteristic expose how cooperation / communication doesn't always fall along the line of that which CSCW-applications are designed to support: the creation and establishment of **shared contexts** (common information spaces): "While CSCW derives from a commitment to establishing shared contexts, it is important to examine carefully and respect the control requirements of different groups of users along with the "politics" of sharing and withholding, inclusion and exclusion." (p. 33).

### Keywords:

- **Articulation work:** "a work process or even a "supra work process" in its functionally for the performance of distributed activities" (p. 34) -> where have we (previously) come across the concept of articulation work and how was it defined?<sup>1</sup>
- **Disarticulation:** "misassessing, mismonitoring, mistiming, misbalancing of risks, misrectifying, and miscommunication" (p. 36, quoting Fagerhaugh 1987:14)
- **Mechanisms of interaction:** Abstract devises (such as plans, classifications schemes, procedures or schedules) that are embedded in a software

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<sup>1</sup> **Articulation work:** reorganize, maintenance, establish, meshing, "a kind of supra-type of work" (Schmidt & Bannon 1992:18, quoting Strauss1985).

application and provide generic facilities for articulation work” (p. 34) -> How does ‘Mechanisms of interaction’ relate to ‘coordination mechanisms’?<sup>2</sup>

- **Locale** social organization of interaction: “the use of space to provide the settings of interaction, the settings of interaction in turn being essential to specifying its conceptuality.” (p. 35, quoting Giddens 1984:118f).
- **Regionalisation** social organization of interaction: “the zoning of time-space in relation to routinised social practices.” (p. 35, quoting Giddens 1984:118f).
- **Place/space/time:** Discussion -> why is it important to talk about place, space, time within this text (in relation to understanding communication from an analytical perspective of locale and regionalization)?
- **Open and private interactions:** Distinguish between “interactions that aim at sharing, exposing, making explicit, or prying open” and interactions that seek to hide, create privileges, or maintain boundaries, but also to preserve privacy, autonomy, confidentiality and solitude” (p. 34).

### Questions for discussion:

- 1) How is CSCW talked about in these texts?
- 2) How is cooperation talked about in these texts?
- 3) What is ‘it’ that technology should support *and* designers be aware of when designing applications for supporting cooperation?

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<sup>2</sup> “a mechanism, that by means of a set of conventions and prescribed procedures and supported by a symbolic artefact with a standardized format, stipulates and mediates the coordination of distributed activities of large cooperative ensembles” (Carstensen & Sørensen 1996:391).