

Seminar in Org Comm: Technology in Organizations



COMM 7369/8369 Seminar in Org Communications, 001 Fall 2010

Th 6-9 pm, TC 237A

Course Description

This graduate seminar will examine the history and functions of communication technologies in organizations, with a particular emphasis on the technologies themselves (i.e. smartphones, networked computers) and the various channels of communication enabled by these technologies (email, blogs, social network sites, etc.). We will examine both the theoretical explanations and practice-based examples of technology use, adoption, and dis-adoption in a variety of organizational settings.

Instructor Information

Kris M. Markman, Ph.D.
Office: TC 219
Fall 2010 Office Hours: TTH 2-4pm or by appointment
Email (best contact): k.markman@memphis.edu
Office phone: 901-678-5458

Required Texts

All required readings will be posted online in eCourseware (elearn.memphis.edu). Students are required to have computer/internet access for this class. Familiarity with wikis is helpful but not required.

Class wiki: <https://umwiki.memphis.edu/display/TechOrg2010/Home>

Assignments

Paper 1: Theory Critique

15%

For this assignment, you will select a theory relating to the use of communication technologies in organizations and present a review and critique of the selected theory. Your paper should include a discussion of the development and application of the theory as shown in the research, and your critique of the theory as it has and may in the future be used to study communication technologies in organizations. What are the predictive/explanatory strengths and weaknesses of the theory? How well has this theory held up given the changes in technology in the last decade? Your paper should include suggestions for future extensions/revisions of the theory in light of current research and technology trends.

All papers must be double-spaced, and should use APA 5th edition style for citations. Papers should be 2000-2500 words in length (excluding reference list).

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Paper 2: Literature Review**20%**

For this assignment, you will write a comprehensive literature review on a specific topic of your choosing related to the study of communication technologies in organizations. Your review should include an introduction explaining the relevance of your topic to organization communication, a synthesis of the relevant literature (with a focus on research in the last 10 years, as applicable), and a discussion of recurring themes in the literature. You should conclude with suggestions for future research in the area.

All papers must be double-spaced, and should use APA 5th edition style for citations. Papers should be 2000-2500 words in length (excluding reference list).

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Group Research Project**35%**

This project will require you to work in a team of your choosing of 2-4 people. Your team has two options for this project: A) Conduct a small-scale original research project on a topic related to communication technology in organizations or B) Conduct an audit/assessment of the communication technology systems in a specific organization. Teams choosing option A will be expected to design and conduct research suitable for conference presentation and intended to contribute to the general body of knowledge in this area. Team choosing option B will be expected to conduct a project with the aim of making specific recommendations for the organization. Details for each of these options will be discussed in class. Teams must select their option and have topics approved by the instructor before proceeding. In addition, teams selecting option B must present evidence of permission from key stakeholder(s) in the organization in order to proceed.

The final project will result in a major, group-authored paper, worth 80% of the total project grade, and a group presentation to the class, worth 20% of the total project grade. The final paper must be 8000-10,000 words (excluding reference list) and should include a review of the relevant literature for both options. Team may incorporate sections from individual team members' Paper 2 literature reviews as appropriate.

Team project topics and ongoing updates should be posted on a team page on the class wiki.

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Class Participation**30%**

As this is a graduate seminar, active participation in all class discussions is expected. Strong grades for participation will require attendance at all class sessions and evidence that articles/chapters have been read before class. In addition, each student will be assigned 3-5 class readings to summarize over the course of the semester. Article summaries should include a summary (approx. 200 words), key take-aways for researchers/practitioners, and 3-5 discussion questions. **All article summaries should be posted on the class wiki no later than 5pm CT on the day of class.** Students will also be expected to contribute to the ongoing discussion by posting comments on the article summaries. An average (i.e. "C") level of participation will be considered one comment per week.

In class discussion and attendance will count for 50% of the total participation grade; Article summaries and wiki participation will count for the other 50%.

Breakdown of Letter Grades (in %)

A = 94-100	A- = 90-93	
B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79	C = 74-76	C- = 70-73
D+ = 66-69	D = 60-65	F = 0-59

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs: (<http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs>). Please take a look, in particular, at the sections about “Academic Dishonesty,” “Student Code of Conduct and Responsibilities,” and “Disruptive Behaviors.” I will expect students to be aware of these guidelines and to conduct themselves accordingly. Any instance of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism and cheating, will be reported to Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs in accordance with department policy, and will result in an automatic grade of “F” for the class.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 100 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Other Class Policies

As a technology-intensive class, students are encouraged to bring laptops or other devices to class to aid them in note-taking, information retrieval, or other class activities. However, as graduate students I expect you to exercise responsibility with any technologies and avoid any technology use that would disrupt the class or provide a distraction to your classmates. This means that cell phones should be turned to silent, and laptops and other devices should be muted.

Students who have questions or concerns about the class are encouraged to come to office hours or schedule an appointment to speak with me. All appointments should be requested at least 48 hours in advance.

As a general rule, I will return emails within 24 hours M-F and 48 hours on weekends/holidays. I will post notices on eCourseware if I will be traveling or otherwise inaccessible for longer periods. I cannot guarantee a response for questions about assignments sent fewer than 24 hours in advance.

All written assignments may be turned in as a hard copy or electronically via the Dropbox on eCourseware. I will NOT accept emailed assignments. Only one copy (paper or electronic) is required. All assignments submitted electronically will be returned in the same format.

Schedule (subject to change with notice)

9/2	Overview of class, individual introductions and discussion of course goals. Overview of technology and terms (if necessary). Overview of eCourseware and wiki (as applicable). Assignment of discussion leaders. Preliminary team organization/meetings and discussion of possible topics. Collaborative glossary building.
9/9	<p>Overview of organizational communication & technology research.</p> <p>**Final team selection and topics due on wiki by class time.</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Corman, S. R. (2006). On being less theoretical and more technological in organizational communication. <i>Journal of Business & Technical Communication</i>, 20, 325-338.</p> <p>Feldner, S. B., & D'Urso, S. C. (2010). Threads of intersection and distinction: Joining an ongoing conversation within organizational communication research. In <i>Communication Research Trends</i> (Vol. 29, pp. 4-28): Centre for the Study of Communication & Culture.</p> <p>D'Urso, S. C., & Pierce, K. M. (2009). Connected to the organization: A survey of communication technologies in the modern organizational landscape. <i>Communication Research Reports</i>, 26, 75-81.</p> <p>Santra, T., & Giri, V. N. (2009). Analyzing computer-mediated communication and organizational effectiveness. <i>Review of Communication</i>, 9, 100-109.</p>
9/16	<p>Theories & models of technology usage: Part 1</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Stephens, K. K., & Sætre, A. S. (2005). Media choice and ICT use. In L. D. Browning, A. S. Sætre, K. K. Stephens & J. O. Sørnes, <i>Information & communication technologies in action: Linking theory & narratives of practice</i> (pp. 27-35). New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Trevino, L. K., Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1990). Understanding managers' media choices: A Symbolic Interactionist perspective. In J. Fulk & C. W. Steinfield (Eds.), <i>Organizations and communication technology</i> (pp. 71-94). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Fulk, J., Schmitz, J., & Steinfield, C. W. (1990). A social influence model of technology use. In J. Fulk & C. W. Steinfield (Eds.), <i>Organizations and communication technology</i> (pp. 117-140). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Browning, L. D., & Stephens, K. K. (2005). Giddens' structuration theory and ICTs. In L. D. Browning, A. S. Sætre, K. K. Stephens & J. O. Sørnes, <i>Information & communication technologies in action: Linking theory & narratives of practice</i> (pp. 85-92). New York: Routledge.</p>
9/23	<p>Theories & models of technology usage: Part 2</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>van den Hooff, B., Groot, J., & de Jonge, S. (2005). Situational influences on the use of communication technologies. <i>Journal of Business Communication</i>, 42, 4-27.</p> <p>Dobos, J. (1992). Gratification models of satisfaction and choice of communication channels in organizations. <i>Communication Research</i>, 19, 29-51.</p> <p>Flanagin, A. J., & Waldeck, J. H. (2004). Technology use and organizational newcomer socialization. <i>Journal of Business Communication</i>, 41, 137-165.</p> <p>Leonardi, P. M. (2009a). Crossing the implementation line: The mutual constitution of technology and organizing across development and use activities. <i>Communication Theory</i>, 19, 278-310.</p>

9/30	<p>Theories & models of technology usage: Part 3--Adoption & dis-adoption **Draft outline of Group Project should be posted on wiki by class time.</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Browning, L. D., & Sørnes, J. O. (2005). Rogers' diffusion of innovations. In L. D. Browning, A. S. Sætre, K. K. Stephens & J. O. Sørnes, <i>Information & communication technologies in action: Linking theory & narratives of practice</i> (pp. 47-55). New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Markus, M. L. (1990). Toward a "Critical Mass" theory of interactive media. In J. Fulk & C. W. Steinfield (Eds.), <i>Organizations and communication technology</i> (pp. 194-218). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Yuqiong, Z. (2008). Voluntary adopters versus forced adopters: integrating the diffusion of innovation theory and the technology acceptance model to study intra-organizational adoption. <i>New Media & Society, 10</i>, 475-496.</p> <p>Lin, C., & Ha, L. (2009). Subcultures and use of communication information technology in higher education institutions. <i>Journal of Higher Education, 80</i>, 564-590.</p> <p>Leonardi, P. M. (2009b). Why do people reject new technologies and stymie organizational changes of which they are in favor? Exploring misalignments between social interactions and materiality. <i>Human Communication Research, 35</i>, 407-441.</p>
10/7	<p>Technology usage studies: Part 1</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Linlin, K. (1996). Social and nonsocial uses of electronic messaging systems in organizations. <i>Journal of Business Communication, 33</i>, 297-325.</p> <p>Zack, M. H., & McKenney, J. L. (1999). Social context and interaction in ongoing computer-supported management groups. In G. DeSanctis & J. Fulk (Eds.), <i>Shaping organization form: Communication, connection, and community</i> (pp. 247-294). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Stephens, K. K., Sørnes, J. O., Rice, R. E., Browning, L. D., & Sætre, A. S. (2008). Discrete, sequential, and follow-up use of information and communication technology by experienced ICT users. <i>Management Communication Quarterly, 22</i>, 197-231.</p> <p>Chesley, N. (2010). Technology use and employee assessments of work effectiveness, workload, and pace of life. <i>Information, Communication & Society, 13</i>, 485-514.</p>

10/14	<p>Technology usage studies: Part 2</p> <p>**Paper 1 due by 6pm CT</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Ducheneaut, N. B. (2002). The social impacts of electronic mail in organizations: A case study of electronic power games using communication genres. <i>Information, Communication & Society</i>, 5, 153-188.</p> <p>Shaw, B., Scheufele, D. A., & Catalano, S. (2007). The role of presence awareness in organizational communication: An exploratory field experiment. <i>Behaviour & Information Technology</i>, 26, 377-384.</p> <p>Signorelli, A. (2009). How Virgin Media uses Twitter for collaboration. <i>Strategic Communication Management</i>, 13(4), 8-8.</p> <p>Scott, C. R., Lewis, L. K., & D'Urso, S. C. (2010). Getting on the "E" list: Email list use in a community of service provider organizations for people experiencing homelessness In L. J. Shedletsky & J. E. Aitken (Eds.), <i>Cases on online discussion and interaction: Experiences and outcomes</i> (pp. 334-350). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.</p> <p>Wagner, C., & Schroeder, A. (2010). Capabilities and roles of enterprise wikis in organizational communication. <i>Technical Communication</i>, 57, 68-89.</p>
10/21	<p>Technology in context: Non-profit organizations</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Kenix, L. J. (2008). Nonprofit organizations' perceptions and uses of the Internet. <i>Television & New Media</i>, 9, 407-428.</p> <p>Greenberg, J., & MacAulay, M. (2009). NPO 2.0? Exploring the Web presence of environmental nonprofit organizations in Canada. <i>Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition</i>, 2(1), 63-88.</p> <p>Peacock, D. (2008). Weaving the Web into organizational life: Organizational change and the World Wide Web in cultural heritage organizations. <i>Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society</i>, 38, 89-96.</p>
10/28	<p>Technology in context: Other organizational roles/settings</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Berger, B. K., & Park, D-J. (2003). Public relation(ship)s or private controls? Practitioner perspectives on the uses and benefits of new technologies. <i>New Jersey Journal of Communication</i>, 11(1), 76-99.</p> <p>Eyrich, N., Padman, M. L., & Sweetser, K. D. (2008). PR practitioners' use of social media tools and communication technology. <i>Public Relations Review</i>, 34, 412-414.</p> <p>Curtis, L., Edwards, C., Fraser, K. L., Gudelsky, S., Holmquist, J., Thornton, K., et al. (2010). Adoption of social media for public relations by nonprofit organizations. <i>Public Relations Review</i>, 36, 90-92.</p> <p>Chib, A., Lwin, M. O., Ang, J., Lin, H., & Santoso, F. (2008). Midwives and mobiles: using ICTs to improve healthcare in Aceh Besar, Indonesia. <i>Asian Journal of Communication</i>, 18, 348-364.</p> <p>Turner, J. W., Thomas, R. J., & Reinsch Jr, N. L. (2004). Willingness to try a new communication technology. <i>Journal of Business Communication</i>, 41, 5-26.</p> <p>Gabriel, Y. (2008). Against the tyranny of PowerPoint: Technology-in-use and technology abuse. <i>Organization Studies</i>, 29, 255-276.</p>

11/4	<p>Virtual work</p> <p>**Paper 2 due by 6pm CT</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Ladner, S. (2008). Laptops in the living room: Mobile technologies and the divide between work and private time among interactive agency workers. <i>Canadian Journal of Communication</i>, 33, 465-489.</p> <p>Timmerman, C. E., & Scott, C. R. (2006). Virtually working: Communicative and structural predictors of media use and key outcomes in virtual work teams. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 73, 108-136.</p> <p>Walther, J. B., & Bazarova, N. N. (2008). Validation and application of electronic propinquity theory to computer-mediated communication in groups. <i>Communication Research</i>, 35, 622-645.</p>
11/11	<p>Technology & collaboration</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Saunders, C. S., & Ahuja, M. K. (2006). Are all distributed teams the same? Differentiating between temporary and ongoing distributed teams. <i>Small Group Research</i>, 37, 662-700.</p> <p>Johnson, S. K., Bettenhausen, K., & Gibbons, E. (2009). Realities of working in virtual teams: Affective and attitudinal outcomes of using computer-mediated communication. <i>Small Group Research</i>, 40, 623-649.</p> <p>Stephens, K. K., & Davis, J. (2009). The social influences on electronic multitasking in organizational meetings. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 23, 63-83.</p>
11/18	<p>Dark(er) side of technologies in organizations</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <p>Herschel, R. T., & Andrews, P. H. (1997). Ethical implications of technological advances on business communication. <i>Journal of Business Communication</i>, 34, 160-170.</p> <p>D'Urso, S. C. (2006). Who's watching us at work? Toward a structural/perceptual model of electronic monitoring and surveillance in organizations. <i>Communication Theory</i>, 16, 281-303.</p> <p>Flanagin, A. J., Pearce, K., & Bondad-Brown, B. A. (2008, May). The destructive potential of electronic communication technologies in organizations. Paper presented at the International Communication Association annual meeting, Chicago, IL.</p> <p>Roberts, S. J., & Roach, T. (2009). Social networking web sites and human resource personnel: Suggestions for job searches. <i>Business Communication Quarterly</i>, 72, 110-114.</p>
11/25	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY -- NO CLASS
12/2	<p>All final papers due by 6pm</p> <p>Group presentations</p>