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Technology Trouble? Talk to Us Findings from an Ethnographic Field Study

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ABSTRACT

The notion that the design of technology is only fully completed when in use [23] is shared by many who now investigate user participation in design and the domestication of new technologies. Taking this idea as our starting point, we developed a research to action project with a major Canadian hospital. Our goals were to address technology implementation issues that arose as most units in the hospital moved to a new building, in which every piece of technology (ranging from wired beds to drug dispensing machines) was new to staff. In this paper, we report our findings from this project. Emphasis is placed on how institutional arrangements influenced the range of socio-technical possibilities that could be pursued [7]. Work practice problems are discussed in relation to the meso or organizational contexts, including organizational, vendor and staff actor networks.

Keywords

Participant interventionist, technology implementation, meso level analysis, organizational problem solving, ethnography, intervention, actor networks

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