The Role of Everyday Actors in Constituting Organizing Visions in the Digital Age

Journal:	*Internet Research*
Manuscript ID	INTR-11-2024-1742.R3
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	community cognition, ordinary individuals, everyday technology, technology diffusion, inductive theory building, typology

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"*Many unknowns can do it better than the lords of the profession.*" – Glenn Reynolds (2006)

1. Introduction

Actors are inherently "social" and enmeshed in their surroundings (Lamb and Kling, 2003; Levine *et al.,* 1993). As a result, they do not form their understanding or attitude toward a technology in a vacuum by themselves. Their understandings are enabled and constrained by broader cognition, called the organizing vision (OV) (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). An OV is an idea about a technology at the community level. It is also socially constructed by actors as they engage in material activities and share their direct and indirect experiences with one another. Material activities include technology development, comprehension, adoption, adaptation, and use (Swanson and Ramiller, 2004).

An OV influences these activities by manifesting itself in discourse. A discourse refers to a collection of written and oral texts (Ramiller, 2001). Discourse is also a channel through which actors intentionally or unintentionally contribute to an OV (and ultimately to the material activities involved in technology diffusion). Notably, in this digital age, technologies are widely used and discussed outside organizational settings by everyday actors (Turel *et al.,* 2020). Everyday actors in this study are defined as the vast majority in society who do not possess widely recognized status or fame (Rindova *et al.,* 2006; Watts and Dodds, 2007).

Paradoxical as it may seem, everyday actors' discourse is important for technology diffusion: all types of actors hear, seek, and consider what everyday actors say and share—all the time. Today, everyday actors actively participate in technology discourse—notably, via social media. Moreover, they help spread discourse throughout a community; information nowadays often diffuses through digital interactions among everyday actors (Hogsnes *et al.*, 2023),

alongside the traditional one-to-many interactions from an "influential" to everyday people (Watts and Dodds, 2007, p. 441). Most importantly, everyday actors' voices carry authenticity and trust (Campbell and Farrell, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021), and this especially has a unique appeal in the current era as, for example, "consumers are growing weary of all those [social media influencers'] ads dressed up as entertainment" (The Economist, 2024). Indeed, researchers and practitioners have revealed that everyday actors induce stronger engagement from their followers (Campbell and Farrell, 2020; Pimienta, 2021; Stephen and Galak, 2012).

All this is not to say that only everyday actors matter in technology diffusion. Notably, influentials (e.g., IT analysts, journalists, and mega-influencers) have a wider reach and confer authority (Swanson, 2010; Watts and Dodds, 2007). The OV literature indeed examines the role of influentials in various OV evolution stages (e.g., Miranda *et al.,* 2015; Pollock *et al.,* 2022; Wang and Ramiller, 2009). In this digital age, however, this prevailing focus on traditional influentials is simply no longer sufficient for understanding how an OV is constituted, let alone how it impacts technology diffusion. As a first step to address this critical lag in OV theory, we pose the following research question: *how is an organizing vision constituted through the discourse of everyday actors?*

To answer this question, we conduct an inductive study of the OV for fitness trackers. Through a constant comparison analysis between data and emergent understandings, we found that everyday actors broadly perform four OV-constituting acts. These include composing, amplifying, muffling, and contextualizing an OV (with each act rooted in everyday actors' discursive framings). We also found that the four acts evolve distinctively, generating more nuanced OV evolutionary trajectories than previously understood.

Overall, our study challenges an assumption rooted in the information age, captures unique ways in which everyday actors discursively frame technology, and produces a concrete conceptual tool—a typology of OV-constituting acts—that is conducive to aptly theorizing OVs in the digital era. Our longitudinal findings also recast a widely held view that an OV evolves as an integrated whole in a unified manner.

2. Community Members in OV Theory

Technology diffusion is not simply about widespread adoption and use. Diffusion also involves other material activities such as learning about technology—for example, its nature, use cases, upsides, and downsides (Kee, 2017; Swanson and Ramiller, 2004). This is where OVs play a key role.

An OV is a community-level idea about a technology (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997), often recognized by a category label such as ERP, AI, and fitness tracker (James *et al.,* 2019; Wang, 2009). This "community cognition" (Miranda *et al.,* 2015) is created, maintained, and substantiated by discourse produced by community members. In OV theory, a community is broadly defined as a group of actors interested in material activities involving technology (Wang and Ramiller, 2009). These activities include technology development, promotion, comprehension, adoption, implementation, adaptation, and use (Swanson and Ramiller, 2004; Yoo, 2010). Since actors are social, these material activities are not "primarily" actors' own doing (Lamb and Kling, 2003, p. 197). They are mostly the imprints of the community cognition out there to which actors are passively exposed and about which actors actively learn and study (Kling and Iacono, 1988; Levine *et al.,* 1993).[i]

Certainly, actors have agency. Prasopoulou (2017) masterfully demonstrated how technology users "reconfigure everyday practices in surprising and productive ways" even under

the towering influence of an OV (p. 293). Still, there is no denying that OVs have significant influence (e.g., Klecun, 2016; Marsan *et al.,* 2012). For instance, Currie (2004) found that a "confusing and contradictory" OV hampered the diffusion of ASP (Application Service Provision). Similarly, Miranda *et al.* (2015) showed that the coherence of the social media OV, along with its continuity, clarity, and diversity, was critical for social media diffusion.

Ultimately, it is the community members who impact technology diffusion; they are the ones who create and sustain OVs (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). In other words, they contribute their direct and indirect experiences with technology to the technology discourse. Commonly recognized community members include vendors (Yang *et al.,* 2008), organizational adopters (Wang and Ramiller, 2009), consultants (Swanson, 2010), IT analysts (Pollock *et al.,* 2022), journalists (Wang and Swanson, 2008), governments (Standing *et al.,* 2017), and academics (Palas and Bunduchi, 2021). OV theory also particularly recognizes institutional entrepreneurs, such as dominant organizations (Yang *et al.,* 2008), regulators (Fradley *et al.,* 2012), and executive editors (Wang and Swanson, 2008).

To date, studies (e.g., those mentioned above) have mainly theorized how these influentials create and drive OVs. For instance, Pollock *et al.* (2022) showed that some IT analysts (e.g., Gartner) have "cognitive authority" and thus get to originate OVs by drawing boundaries around a set of vendors and technologies. IT analysts also "police" the boundaries by adding and removing technologies in their analysis and reports. Wang and Swanson (2008) highlighted the role of powerful journalists. They found that section editors at *Business Week* utilized a special advertising section to help sustain the CRM OV. Through this section, the editors provided credible discourse, renewed attention periodically, and motivated prospective and current users.

2.1. The Need for Incorporating Everyday Actors in OV Theory

Examining traditional influentials has been insightful and remains a meaningful endeavor. However, we now live in a digital age, and this new age calls for "reimagining" OV theory (Swanson *et al.*, 2025). The digital age is marked by the widespread availability of affordable yet powerful technologies—not just for big corporations but also for everyday actors (Turel *et al.*, 2020; Yoo *et al.*, 2024). Indeed, digitalization for all types of actors is deeply and continuously unfolding (Baiyere *et al.*, 2023), so much so that Baskerville *et al.* (2020) even declared "digital first." In this new age, OV theory's prevailing focus on traditional influentials is simply no longer sufficient for theorizing technology. A key group of actors it needs to incorporate is *everyday actors*. There are two related reasons.

First, all types of actors hear, seek, and consider what everyday actors say and share—all the time. Today, everyday actors heavily engage with technology and actively participate in its discourse—notably via social media, which has reduced authorship and influence constraints (Miranda *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, everyday actors help spread discourse throughout the community. Information nowadays often diffuses through digital interactions among everyday actors (Hogsnes *et al.*, 2023), alongside the traditional one-to-many interactions from an influential to everyday people (Watts and Dodds, 2007). Most importantly, everyday actors' voices carry authenticity and trust, often inducing high engagement (Campbell and Farrell, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021; Reynolds, 2006). Their voices—such as those of friends—are also readily available in one's digital feed.

Even in the current digital environment, where a variety of traditional influentials also compete for attention, everyday actors still occupy a unique place in people's minds. To illustrate, the voices in one's social circle are still, by far, the most common go-to sources for

recommendations (The Nielsen Company, 2021).[ii] Moreover, studies and practitioners alike show that while macro-influencers may have a wide reach, actors with a smaller following (e.g., everyday actors) tend to draw stronger engagement from their followers (Kay *et al.*, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021; Streetbees, 2024). A key reason is that "consumers are growing weary of all those [social media influencers'] ads dressed up as entertainment" and no longer see many influencers as "people they could trust" (The Economist, 2024).

The second problem with OV theory's prevailing focus on traditional influentials is that they have less influence on an increasingly prevalent form of computing in the digital age. When digitalization of organizational practices was the prevailing concern during the information age, traditional influentials (e.g., consulting firms and Gartner) offered the authority and credibility that firms needed to justify innovation adoption and organizational restructuring. Moreover, since the stakes and costs were much higher for organizational computing, actors were more willing to listen to those "experts" (Pollock *et al.,* 2022). However, we now live in "technosociety" (Baskerville *et al.,* 2020), where more affordable yet powerful digital technologies are widely available and actively utilized by everyday actors beyond organizations (Turel *et al.,* 2020). Moreover, everyday actors' analyses, especially when aggregated, can offer considerable "expertise." All this results in decreasing influence of traditional influentials in technosociety. In all, everyday actors should be taken seriously if we wish to theorize technology deeply—or even adequately—in the digital age.[iii]

3. Methods

Since little knowledge exists about how an OV is constituted by everyday actors, we conducted an inductive case study for theory building (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). While analyzing

data, we consulted the existing literature to help make sense of what emerged from the data (Levina, 2021). Figure 1 summarizes our methodology.

*** Figure 1 ***

3.1. Case and Data

We examined the OV for fitness trackers. In line with the theory-building tradition (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007), we purposefully selected this case to better understand how everyday actors constitute OVs. We had three selection criteria: technology widely used by everyday actors, technology about which everyday actors actively engaged in discourse, and technology for which a discourse had developed over a period of time. We selected a single case; many OV studies—and more broadly, many theory-building studies—zoom in on a single case for a deep understanding (e.g., Miranda *et al.*, 2015; Wang and Ramiller, 2009; Wang and Swanson, 2007).

Fitness trackers are a collection of digital technologies (e.g., devices and apps) that allow people to track their health and fitness goals and connect the tracking data to other technologies for further analysis and sharing (James *et al.*, 2019). Examples include fitness bands, clip-ons, and digital rings, as well as apps for measuring health and fitness activities. What are now commonly recognized as digital fitness trackers were pioneered by Fitbit (Roberts and Kim, 2024), founded in 2007. The year 2007 thus marks the de facto beginning of the OV for fitness trackers.

To understand how everyday actors constitute the fitness tracker OV, we tapped Twitter (the *hub* for everyday actors' discourse)—now called X—from 2007 to 2021.[iv] We collected tweets[v] that included two terms: fitness and tracker. We collected only those that were retweeted at least once. Saying something about technology in public does not automatically constitute an OV (although it may eventually). The discourse must be read and engage community members'

thinking. Such engagement is represented in the conscious act of retweeting (Cha *et al.,* 2010). Retweeted tweets thus constitute an OV—i.e., they have somehow engaged community members. Moreover, unlike other forms of engagement (e.g., commenting), retweeting further spreads the original tweets, potentially engaging even more actors along the way. In total, we collected over 67,000 tweets through 2021. Figure 2 shows the trajectory of the fitness tracker OV as represented in tweets.[vi]

*** Figure 2 ***

3.2. Identifying Everyday Actors

We used the follower count to identify everyday actors (Cha *et al.,* 2010; Park *et al.,* 2021; Watts and Dodds, 2007). Research, as well as practitioners, considers anyone with fewer than 10,000 followers to be "nano-influencers," meaning they are everyday people, but their opinions are still influential (Campbell and Farrell, 2020; Himelboim and Golan, 2023; Pimienta, 2021). There are no theoretical lower bounds for conceptualizing these nano-influencers (Campbell and Farrell, 2020). We focused only on those with 1,000 or fewer followers (as of July 2022) for data analysis. Theoretically, we wanted to be more conservative, or "extreme," as these approaches offer greater clarity for emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007)—i.e., the emergent OV-constituting acts are indeed by *everyday* actors.

Empirically, 1,000 followers also represents a conservative threshold. It is less than half of the median follower count (2,124) and approximately 1.5% of the average follower count (67,348). Not surprisingly, there were no prominent organizations or individuals in the selected user group. Nonetheless, a few officially "verified" accounts existed.[vii] Because Twitter considered them notable (Burgess, 2017), we removed them to further ensure our conservative selection. We did include organizations, which may consist of a small number of individuals or even a single individual (e.g., The Geeky Globe, 2024). Consistent with the definition of

everyday actors in this study, the included organizations did not possess widely recognized status or fame. All in all, the average number of followers in the selected tweets was 408, which is also close to the reported average number of followers in recent decades: approximately 450 followers (Petrov, 2023). The following is an example of an everyday actor profile: *"I was born in West Java, Indonesia, and I had been attached to several companies. I like new technologies and enjoys playing with it :)"* Iman Suherman, 552 followers. A total of 15,706 tweets were posted by these everyday actors.

3.3. Data Analysis

Of the 15,706 posts, we took a random sample of 2,000 (13%) for data analysis. Overall, we performed a constant comparison analysis, moving back and forth between the data and our emergent understandings (Charmaz, 2006)[viii]. The actual analysis is described below.

3.3.1. Coding for Everyday Actors' OV-constituting Acts

Our goal in the initial stage was to get a general sense of how everyday actors participated in the technology discourse. We broadly assessed, with an open mind, what everyday actors talked about regarding trackers and how they talked about them (Miranda *et al.*, 2015). We assigned each tweet descriptive words and phrases without concerning how these codes would eventually relate to constituting an OV. These assigned codes—refined later and presented as first-order categories in Figure 3—include emphasizing trackers degrading health, describing tech by using the expression "best," and sharing self-developed apps. We assigned multiple codes to tweets displaying multiple ways of actor participation.[ix]

*** Figure 3 ***

Performing open coding, we also repeatedly grouped similar codes and abstracted them (i.e., second-order themes in Figure 3) to create some structure out of the messy, emergent open

codes and to understand how everyday actors discursively framed trackers toward constituting an OV. Here, we leveraged the notion of discursive fram*ing* (Miranda *et al.*, 2022) as an ongoing process of constructing technology meanings (Barrett *et al.*, 2013; Davidson, 2002). Participating in discourse, actors, intentionally or unintentionally, describe a technology in certain ways (e.g., focusing on particular functionalities), and such framing efforts together help construct and evolve an OV (Miranda *et al.*, 2015; Wang and Swanson, 2007).

While emerging and refining the second-order themes, we further endeavored to capture the nuances in them—particularly from the perspective of how the emergent framings help constitute community cognition. We scrutinized the nature of individual framings alone and together while consulting their underlying content. This iterative process crystallized in four acts of everyday actors' constituting an OV, i.e., theoretical dimensions in Figure 3. Figure 3 shows the relationships between the three levels of codes. These findings are elaborated later.

3.3.2. Longitudinal Examination of OV-constituting Acts

Since our research question is inherently longitudinal, we continued to examine the emerging OV-constituting acts. A longitudinal investigation was also warranted because a typology alone yields a cross-sectional understanding of an OV, whereas OVs are inherently dynamic and longitudinal phenomena.

We performed exploratory data analysis (EDA) through visualization experiments with quantified data (Tukey, 1977). Specifically, we quantified each constituting act by counting its instances yearly. We then visualized the evolution of each constituting act using various types of charts to identify patterns (Langley *et al*., 1999; Tukey, 1977). We were also, in part, guided by previous research on theorizing from pronounced patterns in visualizations and tabulations

(Abrahamson and Eisenman, 2008; Miranda *et al*., 2015). Our goal was to identify potentially generalizable patterns that may hold across different types of technology.

We adopted two approaches. First, we strove to identify broader patterns while refraining from "overfitting" data to idiosyncratic details—i.e., abstraction (Wang and Ramiller, 2009). Second, we examined whether our observations had theoretical support in the existing literature (Eisenhardt, 1989), which could suggest that our findings may apply beyond our specific empirical setting. Below, we first report the typology of four OV-constituting acts. Building on this, we report the longitudinal examination of how everyday actors constitute an OV.

4. Findings

4.1. Typology of Everyday Actors' OV-constituting Acts

Constituting an OV can be likened to heterogeneous actors spontaneously performing music together (Miranda *et al.,* 2015). In line with this music metaphor, we have identified four acts of constituting OVs: composing, amplifying, muffling, and contextualizing (Figure 3; Table 1).

*** Table 1 ***

4.1.1. Composing

Composing an OV consists of three discursive framings: introducing, highlighting, and elucidating.[x] In performing introducing, actors put forward new ideas and share information about emerging technologies: "*New fitness tracker from @AwakeLabs helps identify anxiety triggers for kids w #ASD*" and "*We are excited to announce that our new smart fitness and health tracker is coming soon. The device is equipped with outstanding features.*"

In performing highlighting, actors concisely spotlight notable aspects of existing trackers' materiality. Examples include "*OnePlus' first wearable is a budget fitness tracker with two-week battery,*" "*Withings Pulse O2 Fitness Tracker Monitors Your Blood Oxygen,*" and

"@mollyschreiber The fitness trackers go a long way in helping people know when they are idle too long." Highlighting also spotlights a tracker's complementary materials (e.g., straps, necklaces): *"You look great! Your fitness tracker should too! Fitbit jewelry sale this month at JLDesignsStudio on Etsy*" and "*The scrunchie is my #Fitbit #Versa in disguise. The data loving part of me wants to wear #fitbitversa2, #polarvantage and #AppleWatch, but the fashion part of me says it looks too geeky to have side by side watches. Problem solved.*"

In performing elucidating, actors elucidate the features and intended functionalities of trackers. To illustrate, elucidating involves delineating tracker features and intended functionalities in linked content: "*NEW VIDEO: @Xiaomi Mi band 4 unboxing and Review. Kindly watch/like/share/subscribe and leave a comment,*" "*If you're interested, I wrote a blog for reviewing the FitBit Surge fitness tracker,*" and "*Got a fitness tracker for Christmas? Here's how I recommend using it for actual results.*" Elucidating also directly delineates tracker features and intended functionalities: *"@feadarling That's how smartwatches and fitness trackers do it, I believe. The amount of light that gets reflected changes during each cycle so they can determine when a new one starts*" and "*Get a deeper understanding of your body, your health, and your progress with #Fitbit charge 3. This water-resistant advanced health and fitness tracker does more than count steps. it tracks 24/7 heart rate, calorie burn, 15+ exercises and more.*"

In sum, elucidating adds elaborations of tracker materiality to the OV. Highlighting, on the other hand, casts a spotlight on notable features and intended functionalities. Introducing emphasizes newness and unveils innovative information about trackers.

4.1.2. Amplifying

Amplifying an OV consists of four discursive framings: uplifting, hyping, justifying, and recommending. In performing uplifting, actors linguistically attach uplifting emotions to

trackers—in effect, constructing an *emotionally positive view* of technology. The following examples attach positive emotions to trackers through uplifting word choices: "*Jawbone's New Up3 Is Its Most Advanced Fitness Tracker Ever,*" "*#WithingsActivitéPop: A fitness tracker that I'd proudly wear,*" and "*Many of our staff have wearable fitness trackers and we love them!*" Casting an artifact in a humorous way also constructs pleasant feelings around the object. Seeing a politician's tracker flashing 5:05 (i.e., SOS), a user mischievously asks: "*Is Barnaby's fitness tracker sending out a distress signal?*" Ostensibly citing a guru, a user proclaims: "*'a step taken without a fitness tracker is a step not taken'- Confucius (I think).*"

In performing hyping, actors play up the social acceptance and popularity of trackers—in effect, constructing a *socially positive view* of technology. Actors illustrate a heightened societal interest in trackers: "*This year's CES is flooded with fitness trackers and there are hundreds,*" "*Demand for smartwatches and fitness trackers is exploding,*" and "*Fitness is a topic at the new year. According to @pewresearch, 1 in 5 Americans use a smart watch/fitness tracker*." Actors also connect trackers to the backing of prominent mainstream firms: "*Digital Fitness Tracker Startup Fitbit Raises $43 Million, Softbank Capital' Steven Murray Joins Board*" and "*Facebook Buys Fitness Tracker Startup Behind Moves*." Finally, actors showcase trackers as raffle prizes, objects desired by many in society: "*Enter To Win A Polar Fitness Tracker via Couponing 4 You*" and "*We will be on stand 4 at the @HW_Chamber #hwexpo tomorrow - come and find out how to claim your free fitness tracker!*"

In performing justifying, actors evidence and defend tracker effectiveness—in effect, constructing a *rationally positive view* of technology. Actors evidence tracker effectiveness via research findings, expert assessments, and self-observations: "*New research published in @JAMANetworkOpen suggests use of fitness trackers in combination with behavioral*

intervention results increases #activity," "*Our #SystematicReview showed that #personalised #mobileapps #fitness #trackers can help people be more active, have a healthier #diet, and reduce #smoking #alcohol,"* and "*My #fitnesstracker has motivated me more than generations of wisdom and #selfHelpBooks.*" Justifying is also subtly performed by refuting claims of tracker ineffectiveness.: "*This is a seriously flawed study if ever I saw one! I reckon most students could pick [gigantic] holes in this one (and suggest valid improvements). BBC News - Fitness trackers 'add miles to your marathon'.*"

In performing recommending, actors recommend trackers outright—in effect, constructing an *imperatively positive view* of technology. They make straightforward recommendations: "*get the kids up and moving with these trackers designed specifically for kids*" and "*If you use activity trackers to monitor fitness, I recommend this app that analyzes that data and gives insights.*" Recommending is also more indirectly performed by providing a list of the best trackers for purchase: "*The 10 Best Fitness Trackers On The Market,*" "*10 of the best fitness trackers for monitoring heart rate,*" and "*8 top fitness bands to get you in shape.*"

In sum, recommending outright recommends trackers. Justifying, however, is more nuanced; it demonstrates and defends tracker effectiveness. Hyping presents social proof for trackers, and uplifting leverages linguistic devices to attach positive emotions to them.

4.1.3. Muffling

Muffling an OV consists of four discursive framings: smearing, disenchanting, exposing, and rejecting. In performing smearing, actors linguistically attach negative emotions to trackers—in effect, constructing an *emotionally negative view* of technology. The following examples attach negative emotions to trackers through negative word choices: "*Fitness Trackers Make Terrible Gifts,*" "*I'm #FedUp with Fitbit Ionic,*" *"@glimming too bad #jawbone #fitnesstracker is*

crappy," and "*FITNESS TRACKERS ARE AS MUCH ABOUT SHOWING OFF AS WORKING OUT.*" Satire evokes negative emotions by portraying the dark side of digital tracking: "*Remember folks Fitbits are just modern-day Tamagotchis. Except the stupid animal you're trying to keep healthy is you*" and "*EMPLOYEES: We are concerned as to your viability as a productive member of the workforce. Wear your fitness tracker. #GeorgeOrwell 1984.*"

In performing disenchanting, actors dispel the social acceptance and popularity of trackers—in effect, constructing a *socially negative view* of technology. Actors point out a growing trend of users abandoning trackers: "*Fitness trackers are on the outs,*" "*Survey: 1 in 3 fitness tracker owners stopped using them this past year,*" and "*Ditched your Fitbit? You're not alone*." Actors also share accounts of companies withdrawing from efforts to develop and promote trackers: "*Intel shuts down group working on wearables and fitness trackers.*"

In performing exposing, actors evidence tracker ineffectiveness and vulnerabilities—in effect, constructing *a rationally negative view* of technology. Actors evidence tracker ineffectiveness via research findings and observations: "*Study Finds That Fitness Trackers May Not Help Weight Loss,*" "*Study hints that wearable fitness trackers do more harm than good,*" and *"#Fitness and Activity #Tracker everywhere – But actually I don't see people getting fitter?!*" Actors also uncover defects in wearability, offering another rational reason for discontinuing use: "*A woman claims a Fitbit exploded on her*" and "*LOOK! Fitness trackers may trigger rashes in people allergic to nickel.*" Actors uncover problems with the operation of trackers as well: "*With Jawbone going under it seems the servers for Up trackers are going down too. Lots of errors"* and "*Ransomwear could attack your fitness tracker, smart watch, and tv.*"

In performing rejecting, actors deny trackers outright—in effect, constructing an *imperatively negative view* of technology. Actors declare their rejection of a tracker on its own

merits: "*Hot take but kid fitness tracker shouldn't exist.*" and "*'The Withings Activity hides a fitness tracker inside a gorgeous watch.' Still wouldn't wear it.*" Slightly differently, actors also declare their rejection of trackers in favor of alternatives: "*The Most Effective Fitness Tracker Is Your Best Buddy*," "*I found a great fitness tracker app. And a nice fasting app. Plus a great app for meal tracking. ... But a couple weeks ago I consolidated them all into an analog format. And I'm never going back,*" and "*Phones are just as good as fitness trackers at tracking #steps.*"

In sum, rejecting outright refuses trackers. Exposing, however, is more nuanced; it evidences tracker ineffectiveness and vulnerabilities. Disenchanting peels away the social belief that trackers are widely accepted, and smearing leverages linguistic devices to attach negative emotions to trackers.

4.1.4. Contextualizing

Contextualizing an OV consists of two discursive framings: embedding and revealing. In performing embedding, actors implicate trackers in everyday moments. The following posts illustrate how trackers are situated in the background of people going about their daily lives: "*Fitness Trackers Show How Many People Woke Up During the Bay Area #earthquakeCalifornia,*" "*Woman Fights Off A Sexual Predator While Jogging, And Her Fitness Tracker Records Every Step,*" and "*Fitness tracker thinks I'm working out, just nerves #SaintsFC*" (watching a soccer game). Slightly differently, the following examples show how trackers, the objects, are simply part of everyday life: "*Previous fitness trackers died in washer. @Misfit Shine gave me extra points in washer and dryer,*" "*I spent most of the day exchanging #cryptocurrencies, but TheHarvey and I walked 4K with my trusty @Actifit_fitness tracker*," and "*Empty Nesters from @FestivalChurch compare data and fitness trackers after our walk.*"

In performing revealing, actors also situate trackers in people's lives; however, this framing surfaces more defined, impactful contexts where technology has more measurable implications. The following examples illustrate this in the context of health and wellness: "*MDs tap fitness trackers and apps to improve care, monitor patients between visits,*" "*Use of a fitness tracker will help to minimize complications after (robot) cystectomy,*" and "*@EleanorSegall I use breathing exercises on my fitness tracker and I find it relaxing. I use it in ubers, at the office, whenever panic kicks in and heart starts racing.*" Implications also go beyond the health and wellness context—to include the legal, corporate, and personal-finance contexts: "*Legal precedent: Activity data from a fitness tracker will be used as evidence in a lawsuit,*" "*How Fitness Trackers Can Make Your Sales Team More Productive,*" and "*With AI and data from my fitness tracker, an insurer could categorize my risk to match my exercise routine. Premium-wise, that could make up for the 15 pounds [£] I may be overweight.*" Questions sometimes serve a revelatory function, suggesting potentially important contexts: "*What role will fitness trackers play in daily healthcare?*" and "*How do wearable fitness trackers fit into the workplace?*"

In sum, embedding and revealing elucidate the ways in which trackers are situated within individuals' lives across diverse contexts. In doing so, they contextualize community knowledge about the adoption and use of the focal technology.

4.2. Evolution of Everyday Actors' OV-constituting Acts

The overall pattern of everyday actors' OV-constituting acts exhibits growth and decline (Figure 4, top panel). This pattern resembles the overall evolutionary trajectory shown in Figure 2, as well as the numerous trajectories of other OVs (e.g., Firth and Lawrence, 2006; Wang, 2009; Wang and Ramiller, 2009). However, a closer examination reveals nuances (Figure 4, bottom panel) that have been masked in the trajectories reported in previous studies thus far.

*** Figure 4 ***

Relative to the overall pattern, the trajectory of composing shows similarity early, but as time progresses, it remains elevated and slowly declines (Figure 4). This trend is corroborated by Table 2, which shows a statistically significant downward trend for the overall trajectory but an insignificant trend for composing.[xi]

*** Table 2 ***

Amplifying and muffling also rise at the beginning. However, they fall much faster—in particular, muffling approaches the bottom. Conspicuously, contextualizing shows little similarity to the overall trajectory, or to any other constituting act. The period-over-period differences in Table 2 corroborate these observations.

5. Discussion

How is an organizing vision constituted through the discourse of everyday actors? We inductively examined everyday actors' discourse on microblogging and discovered that overall, everyday actors help compose, amplify, muffle, and contextualize an OV. These four OV-constituting acts evolve differently over time, generating distinct evolutionary trajectories. The emergent nuanced patterns depart from the conventional trajectories of OV evolution, which follow the shape of a right-skewed distribution (e.g., Firth and Lawrence, 2006; Wang, 2009; Wang and Ramiller, 2009). We now interpret and discuss these findings, ultimately aiming for more generalizable patterns. That is, we highlight the broader trends and offer theoretical explanations while refraining from discussing every detail. We formalize the trends in propositions.

As shown in Figure 4 and Table 2, everyday actors significantly engage in composing an OV early. When technology first comes onto the market, it is rarely mature in either meaning or

materiality (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). In fact, technology is notoriously equivocal (Weick, 1990) or malleable (Kallinikos *et al.,* 2013), especially in the early stages of diffusion (Fayard *et al.,* 2016). Everyday actors, empowered by social media, rise to fill this need for significant sensemaking while tapping the OV themselves to make sense of the new technology (Shin, 2013). However, as technological advancement becomes more incremental over time (Anderson and Tushman, 1990), the value and need for intensive sensemaking gradually decrease. These theoretical explanations and empirical observations lead us to our first proposition:

Proposition 1. Everyday actors' composing will surge in the early stages of technology diffusion; it will then gradually decline.

As shown in Figure 4 and Table 2, everyday actors significantly engage in amplifying an OV early. This pattern resembles composing; just as there is a need for significant sensemaking, there is substantial excitement around the new technology in the early stages of diffusion (Ramiller, 2006). Everyday actors—again, empowered by social media—help fuel this excitement by casting the emerging technology as effective and desirable. However, everyday actors' amplification of the OV significantly declines over time (Figure 4). The hype and excitement diminish (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). Moreover, there is little need to further propel the OV as the technology becomes widely accepted and taken for granted.

Proposition 2. Everyday actors' amplifying will surge in the early stages of technology diffusion, resembling composing; it will then decline precipitously.

As shown in Figure 4 and Table 2, everyday actors also engage in muffling an OV early. However, muffling lags behind amplifying and composing. Actors add exaggerations (Ramiller, 2006) while composing and amplifying, and these exaggerations may not materialize as expected, giving rise to muffling. Actors also look more rationally at the technology after the

initial excitement, discovering unwarranted claims embedded in it (Anderson and Tushman, 1990). Over time, however, everyday actors' muffling declines sharply (Figure 4), much like amplifying. There is little reason to persistently challenge the technology's effectiveness or desirability once it has gained a strong foothold and is widely accepted within the community (Agarwal *et al.*, 2012).

Proposition 3. Everyday actors' muffling will increase in the early stages of technology diffusion, trailing amplifying and composing; it will then decline precipitously.

As shown in Figure 4 and Table 2, everyday actors continually engage in contextualizing an OV, with a slow increase at the beginning. Digital technology has penetrated everyday actors' lives, and social media enables them to discuss their technology-entwined lives. Occasionally, everyday actors' contextualized experiences are picked up by traditional influentials, and other everyday actors further spread such stories throughout their networks (Ding *et al.*, 2023). Everyday actors also seek others' personal input on technology meaning and use, inviting further contextualization (Petter and Giddens, 2023). Contextualization requires prior technology use and learning, which is reflected in the slow increase in the early stages shown in Figure 4. Contextualization continues over time as new pieces of technology (e.g., new models and updates) within the purview of the OV continuously emerge and fade, while users appropriate the new ones and participate in the discourse (Perdana et al., 2021).

Proposition 4. Everyday actors' contextualizing will slowly increase in the early stages of technology diffusion; it will then remain steady.

6. Contributions and Implications

Overall, we extend OV theory to the digital era by incorporating everyday actors. Originating from Swanson and Ramiller (1997), OV theory has been invaluable for understanding core IS

phenomena—technology meaning and diffusion (Kim and Miranda, 2018). However, its assumptions—some rooted in the 1990s information age with an organizational focus—need to be revisited and updated for the digital age. Indeed, Swanson and his colleagues now recognize that:

> "While consumer information technologies such as e-readers, fitness trackers, and smartphones are individually adopted and used, consumer decisions are typically not made independently of each other. Rather, just as with organizational decisions, they are subject to individual, organizational, and social influence, often with bandwagon effects. Collective sense-making in experiential computing seems to be just as common as, if not more common than, in enterprise computing. OVs may play a role in this sensemaking" (Swanson *et al.*, 2025, p. 12).

Today, technology is not just digitizing firms as it once did around the turn of the century. Digitization is now also happening for everyday people in profound ways (Turel *et al.,* 2020). Further, everyday actors now participate heavily in technology discourse, and their discourse resonates with various audiences, influencing their thoughts and decisions (Campbell and Farrell, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2021). It is imperative to incorporate everyday actors into OV theory if we wish to theorize technology deeply—or even adequately—for the digital age.

Beyond merely incorporating everyday actors, we reveal unique ways in which they constitute OVs. Unlike traditional influentials (most of whom are organizational), everyday actors are not bound by organizational policies on expressing emotions in certain ways. That is, everyday actors can fully exercise their agency (Hedman *et al.*, 2019) in constituting OVs. This was evident in everyday actors' informal, emotion-laden discursive framings—most notably, uplifting and smearing. Another distinctive way that everyday actors constitute an OV is through

contextualizing—specifically, through the framings of embedding and revealing. Utilizing their agency and digital technology's generativity (Yoo, 2010), everyday actors freely explore technology and willingly share their own—as well as others'—interesting, mundane, and even controversial emergent use cases without concern for shareholders, competitors, or customers.

Our extension of OV theory also provides a concrete tool—a typology of OV-constituting acts—that can fruitfully guide future theorizing. A typology serves as a conceptual tool that structures a phenomenon, enabling further inquiries and insights (Delbridge and Fiss, 2013). Specifically, our parsimonious typology enables a deeper understanding of the nature of OVs in the digital age and may, in turn, fuel renewed theorizing about their impact on technology diffusion.[xii]

Extending OV theory, we also challenge the widely held view that an OV evolves as an integrated whole in a unified manner. Prior research has treated OV evolution globally, depicting it as right-skewed distributions (e.g., Firth and Lawrence, 2006; Marsan *et al.,* 2012; Wang, 2008; 2009; Wang and Ramiller, 2009; Wang *et al.*, 2015). We, too, observe such a trend in the fitness tracker OV when treated globally, as shown in Figure 2. However, our deeper examination reveals that OV evolution is more complex than previously theorized. For instance, from the muffling perspective, an OV may appear to dissipate over time; in contrast, from the contextualizing perspective, the same OV may continue to remain vibrant over time.

Our discovery of these nuances has another implication: it underscores the need to revisit some other key ideas in OV theory. For instance, how do everyday actors help shape and sustain the three major functions of an OV—interpretation, legitimation, and mobilization (cf. Swanson and Ramiller, 1997)? Within an innovation community, how do the dynamics play out between the learning of everyday actors and that of traditional influentials (cf. Wang and Ramiller, 2009)?

How does an OV for a consumer technology emerge and evolve, and what roles do everyday actors play (cf. Pollock *et al.*, 2022; Wang and Swanson, 2007)? What key attributes of OVs (e.g., coherence) do everyday actors significantly influence, and in what ways (cf. Currie, 2004; Miranda et al., 2015; 2022)? These are urgent questions that touch on some of the key insights of OV theory as it currently stands, and addressing them will help render OV theory more relevant to the new era.

7. Limitations and Future Research

This study has limitations and offers opportunities for future research. Although our findings are derived from a careful case analysis, this study alone cannot guarantee that the emergent typology and OV evolution patterns hold across all types of technology. Before reaching such a generalization, we need to conduct a series of case studies in various contexts (Davison and Martinsons, 2016), together with confirmatory studies using a large, representative sample. Our case study is merely a small yet meaningful step toward more generalizable knowledge. It lays down foundational "building blocks" (Tiwana and Kim, 2019) for theorizing a poorly understood phenomenon—everyday actors' role in constituting an OV.

In building generalizable knowledge, recognizing boundary conditions is paramount. A key boundary condition of our findings is that the technology we studied comprises both ephemeral (e.g., software) and permanent components (e.g., hardware) (von Briel *et al.*, 2018)—i.e., our focal technology represents "high materiality" (Gal *et al.*, 2022). A related boundary condition is that our focal technology, fitness trackers, constitutes a form of "wearable" technology (James *et al.*, 2019)—as opposed to non-wearable technology. Finally, another notable boundary condition is that fitness trackers were pioneered and led by startups and that many other small, young firms also heavily participated in the fitness tracker industry (Kim and

Roberts, 2024). Our findings about how everyday actors constitute OVs will thus most likely hold for those technologies that are highly material wearables with many startups involved in creating and maintaining them. Future research may confirm this conjecture to validate and extend our findings toward more generalizable knowledge.

Our emergent findings will also need to be examined in light of other emerging digital technologies—namely, those that are highly non-material (e.g., metaverses), non-wearable (e.g., smart TVs), and dominated by large firms (e.g., smart glasses). Indeed, these are also digital technologies that share similar attributes with fitness trackers (e.g., generativity); our findings may thus still hold—especially at the highest level of abstraction. However, there might be some important nuances. For example, non-wearable technologies (e.g., smart TVs) are not worn by individuals, and, as a result, less contextualization—particularly embedding—may occur. As for large-firm-dominant technologies, such as smart glasses by Google and Meta, everyday actors' composing could be measurably lower; there are not as many versions or concrete products to highlight or elucidate. Addressing these issues will deepen our understanding of everyday actors' roles in OVs and technology diffusion.

Future research may also consider liked and commented tweets as indicators of actor engagement and their contribution to an OV. However, there are important caveats. Liked tweets tend to capture the socially approved side of discourse. Moreover, actors often click the like button reflexively, without much actual engagement (Tenenboim, 2022). In contrast, commenting typically indicates deeper engagement—even more so than retweeting (Li *et al*., 2021). Tapping solely into commented tweets, however, unnecessarily restricts the discourse underlying an OV; actors often do not add comments because doing so requires time and effort to craft responses. Thus, while commenting does reflect deeper user engagement, a large portion

of user engagement still goes uncaptured if commented tweets are primarily used to represent an OV.

Finally, in the digital age, future research should attend to the nuances in power held by different types of actors. From the traditional perspective, an everyday actor may appear to hold little power; the number of actors they can reach is limited. However, an everyday actor tends to draw stronger engagement from those they do reach—given their authenticity, trust, and the growing weariness of traditional influentials. Power in the digital age thus needs to be understood not just from the reach perspective but also from the *engagement* perspective. Moreover, even from the reach perspective, power requires reimagining—as an aggregate phenomenon. Clearly, a single everyday actor does not reach as many actors as a traditional influential does. However, digital technology enables easy, nearly costless interactions, and everyday actors in the aggregate can contribute and spread information as much as, and often more than, traditional influentials do (Watts and Dodds, 2007). The reach of everyday actors in the aggregate, and thus the *distributive* power they hold, is something that future research should take seriously.

In closing, while our study is not without limitations, it lays down foundational building blocks for future research. It offers foundational insights into the role of everyday actors in constituting OVs. In the digital age, their role will only continue to increase. We hope our study will spark much interest in this important yet critically overlooked research phenomenon.

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Endnotes

[i] An OV is not a homogeneously shared consensus. Actors have idiosyncratic interests and agendas (Barrett *et al.*, 2013) and suffer from bounded rationality (Liao, 2016). Thus, they often "agree to disagree" on the content of an OV (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997, p. 465) and, intentionally or unintentionally, only know, consider, and promote parts of an OV. Miranda *et al.* (2015) showed that an OV is indeed an assemblage of distinct meanings.

[ii] Nielsen's large survey of 40,000 people across the globe revealed that 88% of respondents trust recommendations most from people they know.

[iii] Appendix A compares OV theory and other related key theories.

[iv] See Appendix B for further rationale for selecting Twitter and details on how we collected tweets.

[v] We use the terms Twitter and tweets instead of X and posts, as our study period preceded the official name change. Moreover, the previous terms remain widely recognized and commonly used.

[vi] We observed a similar trajectory in Google Trends using the same search terms. Google searches capture the community's (including everyday actors') interests in the focal technology, which are likely to correspond to ups and downs of the OV's trajectory (Hirschheim *et al.*, 2012).

[vii] Our data ended before Musk's purchase of Twitter in October 2022 and his disruption of the "verified" feature.

[viii] Appendix C offers more detailed general information about data analysis.

[ix] For example, both embedding (contextualizing) and exposing (muffling) were assigned to the tweet "Fitness tracker thinks I'm working out, just nerves #SaintsFC." Another example is "new gear s2 update—I've had all kinds of sleep/fitness trackers and I have no idea how this is so accurate w/out manual intervention," to which we assigned both uplifting (amplifying) and justifying (amplifying).

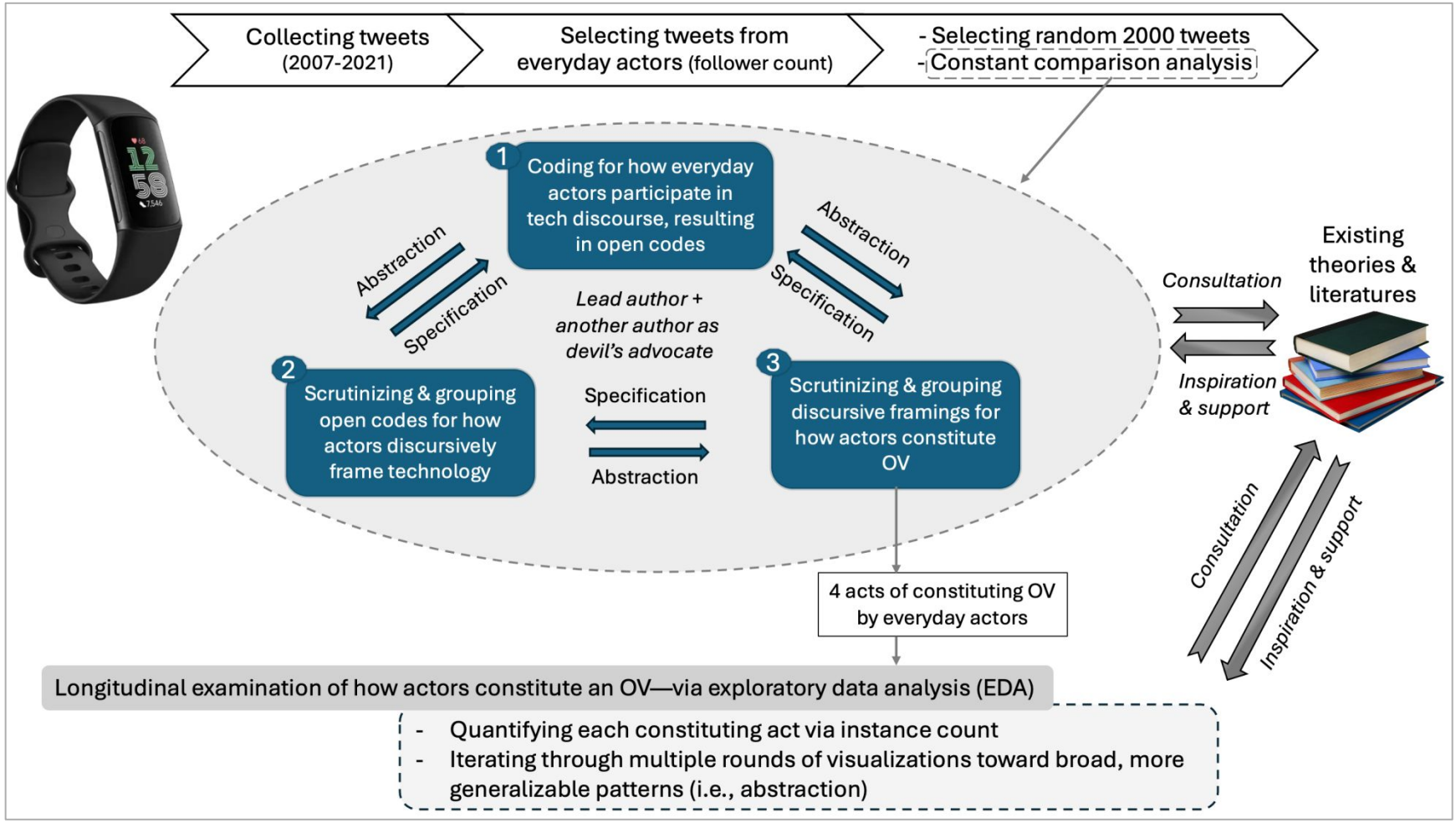
[x] Appendix D lists definitions of all the emergent discursive framings for easy comparison.

[xi] Though it is not required to examine statistical significance in inductive theory building, we follow prior studies to corroborate the observed patterns (Miranda *et al.,* 2015; Wang and Ramiller, 2009).

[xii] Appendix F discusses, from a configuration theory perspective, how our typology opens new possibilities.

Figures and Tables for the Role of Everyday Actors in Constituting Organizing Visions

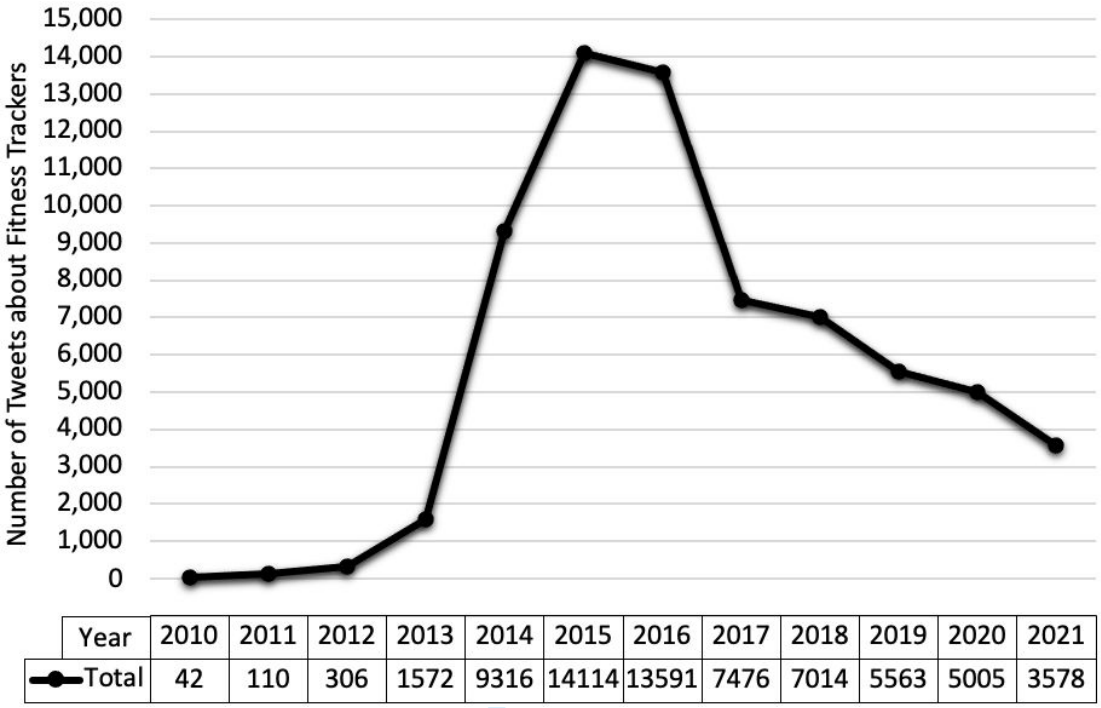
Figure 1. Summary of Methodology



Source(s): Authors' own work

Figures and Tables for the Role of Everyday Actors in Constituting Organizing Visions

Figure 2. Evolutionary Trajectory of Organizing Vision for Fitness Trackers

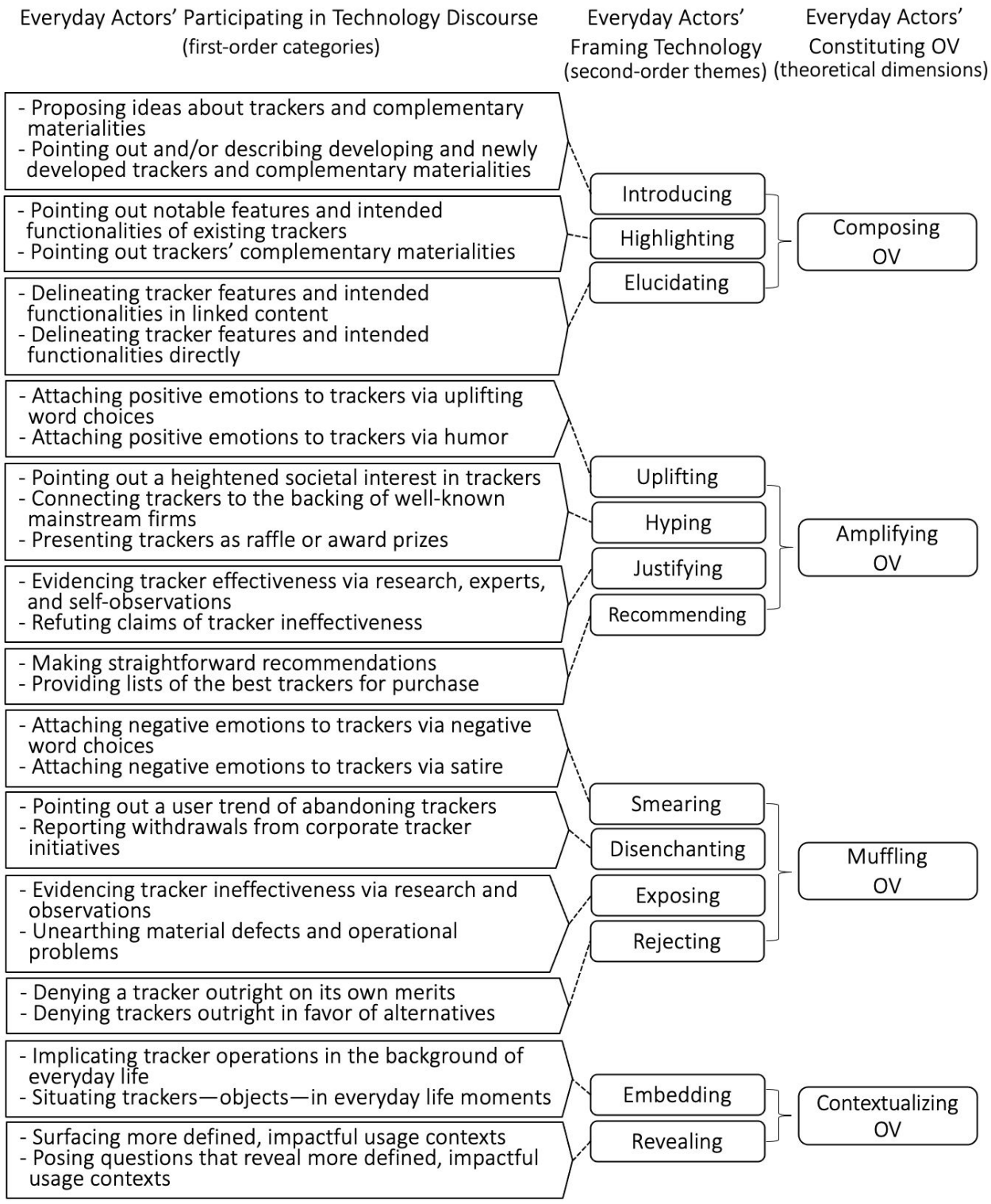


Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	42	110	306	1572	9316	14114	13591	7476	7014	5563	5005	3578

Source(s): Authors' own work

Figures and Tables for the Role of Everyday Actors in Constituting Organizing Visions

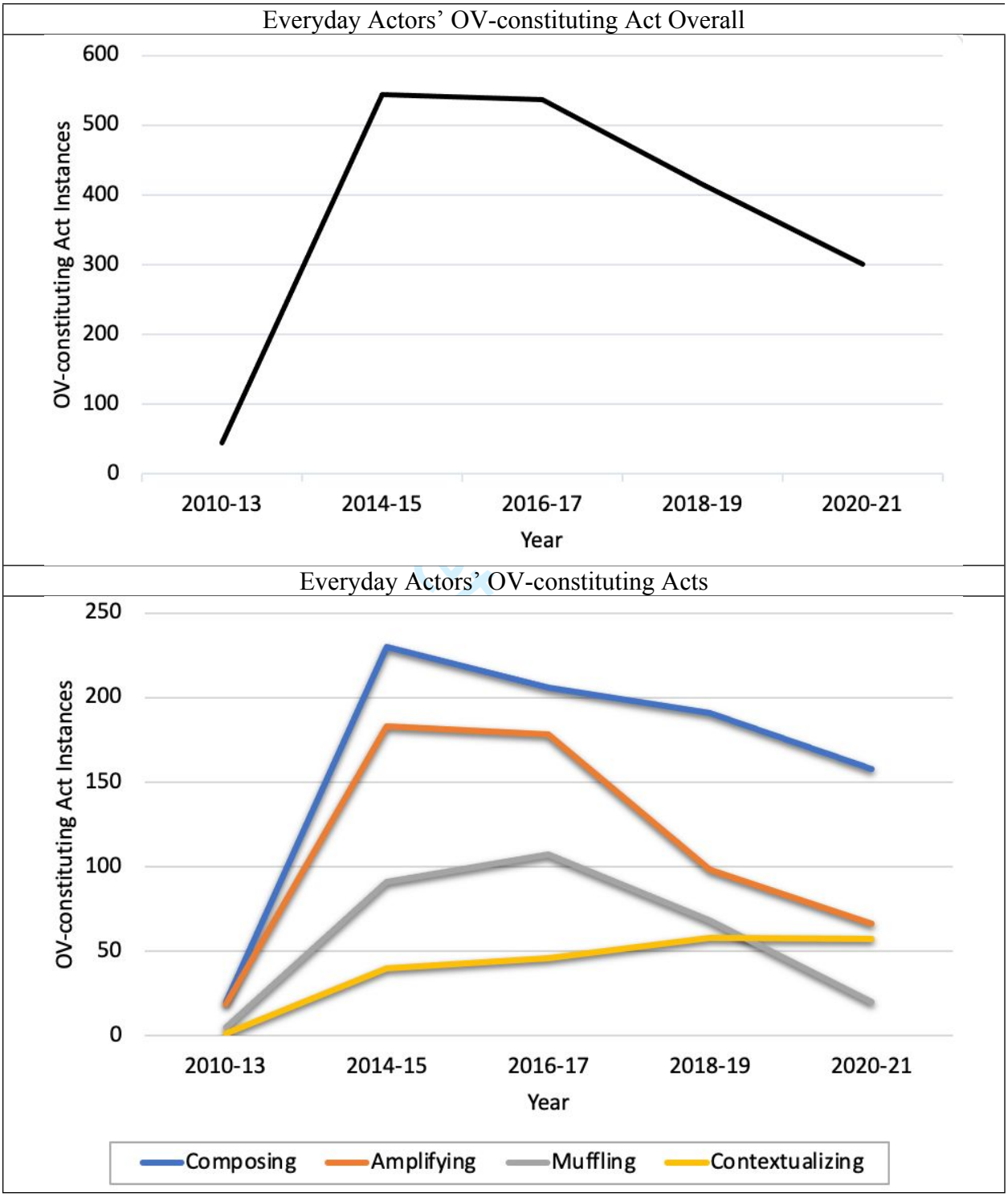
Figure 3. Emergent Codes at Different Levels of Abstraction



Source(s): Authors' own work

Figures and Tables for the Role of Everyday Actors in Constituting Organizing Visions

Figure 4. Evolution of Everyday Actors' OV-constituting Acts for Fitness Trackers



Notes: We use two-year periods, except for the emergence. This approach faithfully renders the trends without unnecessarily complicating the presentation. See Appendix E for details.

Source(s): Authors' own work

Figures and Tables for the Role of Everyday Actors in Constituting Organizing Visions

Table 1. Typology of Everyday Actors' OV-constituting Acts

Constituting Acts	**Definitions**
Composing	Feeding community knowledge about a focal technology by adding descriptions and explanations of its materiality
Amplifying	Promoting community knowledge about a focal technology by characterizing it as effective and desirable
Muffling	Discrediting community knowledge about a focal technology by challenging its effectiveness and desirability
Contextualizing	Contextualizing community knowledge about a focal technology by situating it in actors' lives

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 2. Period-over-period Comparison of Everyday Actors' OV-constituting Acts

	2010-13	**2014-15**	**2016-17**	**2018-19**	**2020-21**
All Combined	**0.23**	**5.67****	**5.59**	**4.32***	**3.14****
Composing	0.42	9.58**	8.58	7.96	6.58
Amplifying	0.40	7.63**	7.42	4.08**	2.75*
Muffling	0.10	3.79**	4.46	2.83*	0.83**
Contextualizing	0.02	1.67**	1.92	2.42	2.38

Notes: Monthly averages of OV-constituting acts (i.e., theoretical dimensions) were used to enable statistical analysis. Two-year periods were used to parsimoniously capture constituting act trajectories; for the first period, four years were combined due to the low number of constituting acts. See Appendix E for details. T tests were performed on monthly averages as a proxy for differences in period totals. * and ** denote significance at .05 and .01. A one-tailed test was conducted, given that only the significance in the predetermined direction was examined.

Source(s): Authors' own work

Appendix A: Relationship between OV Theory and Two Other Key Theoretical Lenses on Technology, Adoption, and Use

OV theory, at its core, concerns technology meaning and diffusion (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997; Kim and Miranda, 2018). In OV theory, discourse plays a central role; it is the source of community cognition (i.e., OV) and is also the manifestation of the cognition (Ramiller, 2001; Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). No other theory of technology meaning and diffusion places discourse so centrally.

The most influential theory of technology adoption and use at the individual level is Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), whose more modern and integrated successor is Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Venkatesh *et al.* (2012) further developed UTAUT2, which is for consumer technologies. the seven antecedents of intention to use are performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value, and habit. TAM is a classic theory that captures technology in a proxy (Orlikowski and Iacono, 2001)—particularly in people's perceptions, such as perceived ease of use and the perception that others think one should use the technology (i.e., social influence). Notably, TAM could incorporate OV theory by considering individuals' perceptions of the discourse of everyday actors as well as that of other actors.

Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) is another key related theory. SCOT and OV theory are similar in that they both adopt the ensemble view of technology (Orlikowski and Iacono, 2001): technology is part of an ensemble of related actors and structures surrounding it. Thus, to understand technology, its human and non-human surroundings must be taken into consideration (Pinch and Bijker, 1987; Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). The two theories share key premises. The major one is that technology is socially constructed, a premise rooted in the notion

of structuration (Jones and Karsten, 2008; Wang *et al.,* 2017)—i.e., materiality and its surroundings dynamically influence each other. The two theories also maintain a focus on human actors—relevant social groups in SCOT and community members in OV theory.

However, there are key differences. SCOT, faithful to its name, focuses primarily on the construction of technology. Specifically, it focuses on how a dominant technology design emerges through the interaction between the focal technology and the interested social groups (i.e., closure mechanisms) (Klein and Kleinman, 2002; Tosoni and Pinch, 2017). While SCOT does not restrict itself to certain types of technology (e.g., organizational IT), its focus on other material activities involved in diffusion is limited. Notably, discourse is not central in SCOT.

In contrast, OV theory embodies the notion that technology cannot be understood separately from its related discourse (Ramiller, 2001). Discourse gives meaning and brings materiality into existence. OVs (or discourse at a more concrete level) influence not only technology construction (and eventually "closure") but also other material activities, such as adoption, implementation, and appropriation (Kim and Miranda, 2018; Swanson and Ramiller, 2004). Another key difference is that OV theory focuses heavily on OVs themselves, such as their content, structure, attributes, evolution, and functions (e.g., Davidson *et al*., 2015; Miranda *et al*., 2015; Swanson and Ramiller, 2003; Wang and Ramiller, 2009). All in all, OV theory is unique in that it focuses significantly on OVs themselves and their impact on technology diffusion.

Appendix B: Twitter Selection Rationale and Data Collection Details

We selected Twitter for several reasons. Twitter involves little learning or cost, so everyday actors routinely use it to connect to the "broader world" (Rosenstiel *et al*., 2015). Reflecting this, Twitter has been described as "the digital town square" (Barbaro, 2022), where everyday actors (along with traditional influentials) talk, inform others, and learn about diverse issues, including technology. Critically, Twitter also serves as a digital depot where everyday actors describe and point to their content available on other platforms, such as YouTube, blogs, and Etsy. In all, Twitter offered a reliable portal through which one could consistently observe the corpus of everyday actors' discourse about technology over time.

We collected tweets from 2007 to 2021. We used *snscrape* for Python, which is "a Python library that can be used to scrape tweets through Twitter's API without any restrictions or request limits" (Sharma, 2022). For triangulation, we selected random periods, collected tweets separately through Twitter's Advanced Search, and compared them with those collected via Python. All tweets matched. We ended data collection in 2021 to ensure data consistency across all years. In 2022, Twitter (currently X) underwent turmoil following Elon Musk's acquisition of the platform, and Twitter has been less stable since then (Mather, 2024). More importantly, the OV literature suggests that a period of about 10 years is often sufficient to understand an OV in depth (Miranda *et al.,* 2015; Wang, 2008; 2009).

We compiled our longitudinal data in July 2022. Notably, such a cross-sectional approach fails to capture potential fluctuations in follower counts. However, our threshold for everyday actors (i.e., followers of fewer than 1,000) was still empirically conservative (as discussed in the main manuscript). Moreover, both researchers and practitioners alike commonly characterize anyone with fewer than 10,000 followers as a "nano-influencer" (Campbell and Farrell, 2020;

Pimienta, 2021), indicating that those with a follower count somewhat greater than 1,000 can still reasonably constitute everyday actors.

Appendix C: Expanded General Information about Data Analysis

Of the 15,706 posts, we took a random sample of 2,000 (13%) for data analysis. Inductive studies indeed use random samples for theory building (Tidhar and Eisenhardt, 2020). Wang and Ramiller (2009), for instance, analyzed a large ERP discourse through a manageable random sample. Following this study, we assessed the representativeness of our sample by comparing its distribution with that of the population, which shows similar patterns (Figure C1). Importantly, our sample was rich and sizable enough to allow for theoretical saturation.

Overall, we performed a constant comparison analysis, moving back and forth between the data and our emergent understandings (Charmaz, 2006). As we progressed with the data, our understandings naturally evolved, resulting in code refinement, emergence, and abandonment. The entire coding process was highly iterative and messy. For example, every time a new second-order category emerged, we revisited the data and investigated whether previous open codes should be reassigned to the new category. Further, we repeatedly checked whether grouped tweets indeed held together as a coherent group sharing a similar nature. When we coded approximately 1,600 tweets along with the linked web resources, we stopped noticing the emergence of new codes—i.e., we reached theoretical saturation.

We read, watched, and listened to the content linked to the tweets to obtain the full context. We excluded tweets that were not in English or not clearly understandable. We also excluded posts that did not appear to influence tracker diffusion, which, by definition, do not constitute an OV (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). An illustrative example is "*The fitness tracker and smartwatch maker Fitbit announced it will move manufacturing operations out of China to*

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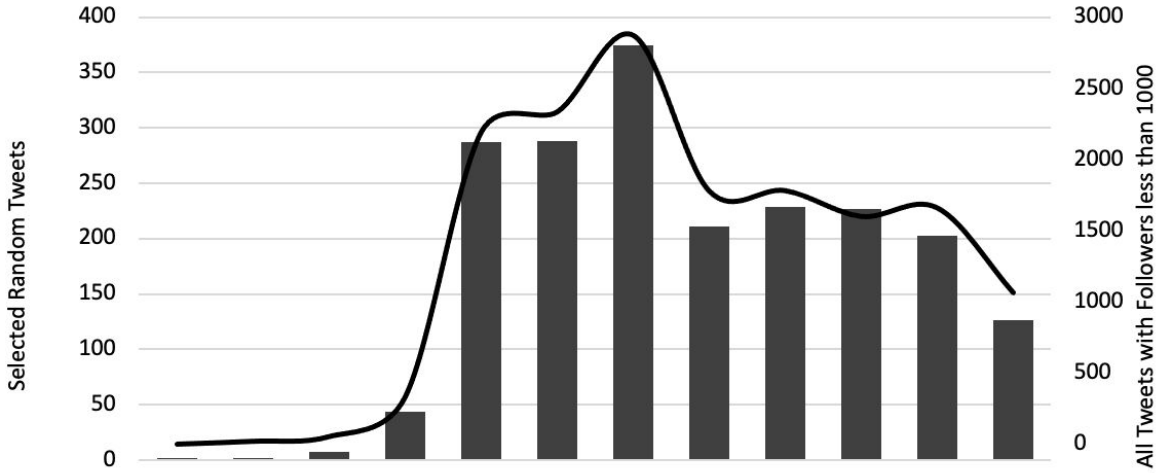
avoid tariffs as President Donald Trump's trade war continues to sow uncertainty for many U.S. businesses."

An author with an intimate understanding of the case domain and the data took the lead in data analysis. Another author with expertise in qualitative analysis but with limited exposure to the domain or OV theory offered a fresh set of eyes, serving as a devil's advocate (Barbour, 2001; Vaast and Pinsonneault, 2021). Playing this role, the author did not participate in the groundwork coding; she offered support, disagreements, and improvements to the codes presented by the lead author. This sensitizing activity refined the codes by surfacing ambiguous wording, coding inconsistencies, and incohesive groupings (Barbour, 2001). We iterated on the codes and groupings until we reached agreement.



Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Random 2000	2	1	7	44	287	288	375	211	229	227	203	126
All	4	24	57	335	2192	2334	2871	1779	1782	1601	1661	1066

Figure C1. Distributions of Everyday Actor Discourse Sample and Population
Note: No data were available from 2007 to 2009
Source(s): Authors' own work.

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Appendix D: Definitions of Emergent Discursive Framings

Table D1. Definitions of Emergent Discursive Framings

Discursive Framing	**Definition**	**OV-constituting Act**
Introducing	Putting forward new technological ideas and sharing information about new technology	Composing
Highlighting	Spotlighting existing trackers' notable materiality concisely	
Elucidating	Elucidating features and intended functionalities of trackers	
Uplifting	Linguistically attaching uplifting emotions to trackers	Amplifying
Hyping	Playing up the social acceptance and popularity of trackers	
Justifying	Evidencing and defending tracker effectiveness	
Recommending	Recommending trackers outright	
Smearing	Linguistically attaching negative emotions to trackers	Muffling
Disenchanting	Dispelling the social acceptance and popularity that trackers have received	
Exposing	Evidencing tracker ineffectiveness and vulnerabilities	
Rejecting	Denying trackers outright	
Embedding	Implicating trackers in everyday moments	Contextualizing
Revealing	Surfacing more defined, impactful contexts for trackers	

Source(s): Authors' own work

Appendix E: Demonstration of Trends Based on Different Periods

For the longitudinal examination, we used two-year periods along with one four-year period. The goal was to identify *trends* in everyday actors' constituting OVs.

As shown in the middle panel of Table E1, the two-year-period chart presents the trends most clearly and adequately. The one-year-period chart may be the most accurate (Table E1 top panel); however, it shows too many data points, specifically ups and downs, making it difficult to discern clear patterns. In constast, the three-year-period chart (Table E1 bottom panel) shows clear-cut patterns but is more prone to masking actual patterns embedded in the data. The two-year-period chart, which we chose, provides sufficient detail without losing much information. Most importantly, the key observations presented in our propositions remain consistent across the other two approaches. For instance, across the three charts, composing shows a gradual decline, while amplifying and muffling decrease more sharply, and contextualizing remains relatively steady over time. Finally, aggregating data at a moderate level can be more conducive to generalizable knowledge by reducing vulnerability to occasional random fluctuations (i.e., avoiding overfitting, to borrow a term from machine learning).

In the OV literature, it is not uncommon to aggregate data when identifying trends. For instance, although Wang and Ramiller (2009) presented the evolution of the ERP OV yearly, they aggregated the yearly data and investigated the OV across three broad stages: emergence (six years), growth (five years), and maturity (four years). Moreover, Miranda *et al*. (2015) aggregated daily data and examined the impact of the social media OV quarterly.

Notably, the first period in our two-year examination spans four years. Typically, in OV studies, the emergence stage is the longest (e.g., Marsan *et al*., 2012; Wang and Ramiller, 2009). The key reason is empirical: there is little material activity in the early stages.

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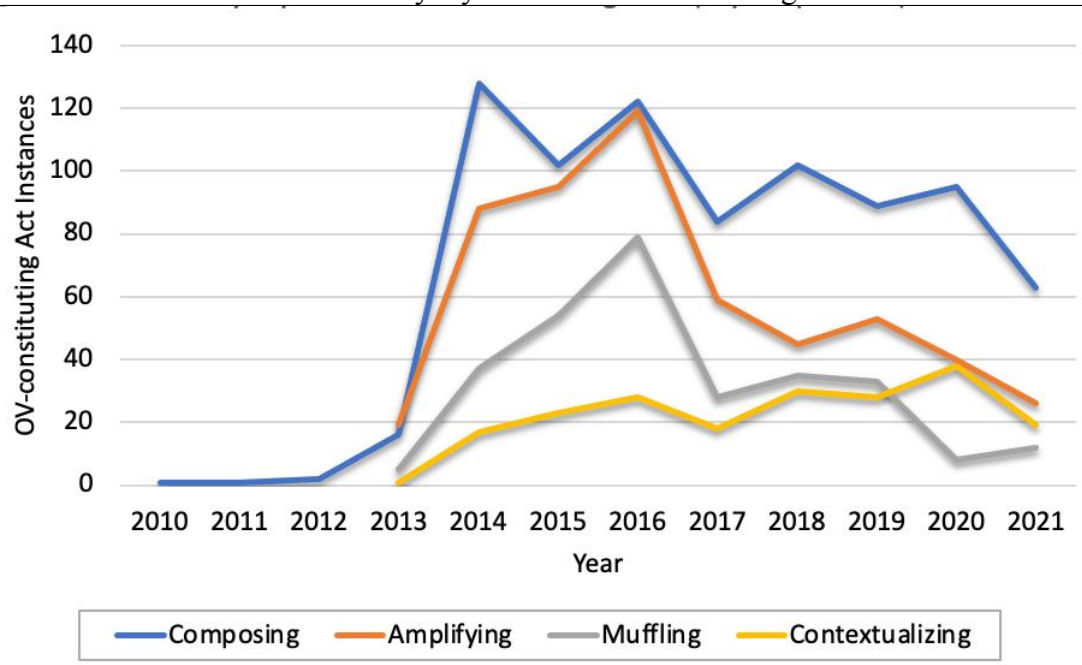
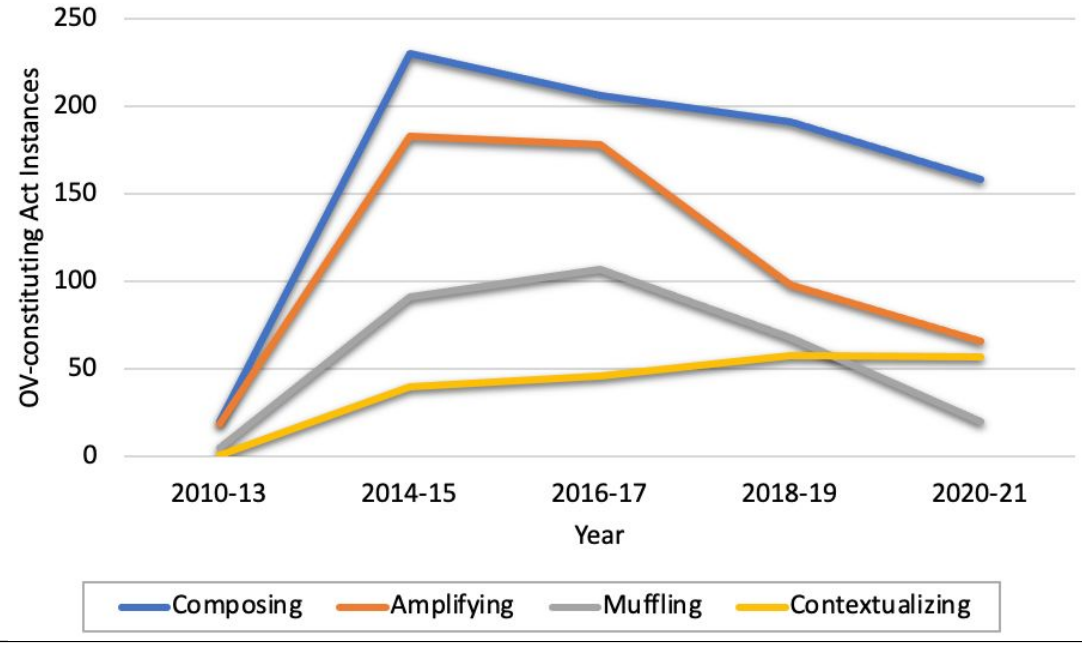
Table E1. Evolutionary Trends Based on Different Periods

Period	Trend of Everyday Actors' OV-constituting Acts
1-year	
2-year (with one 4-year)	

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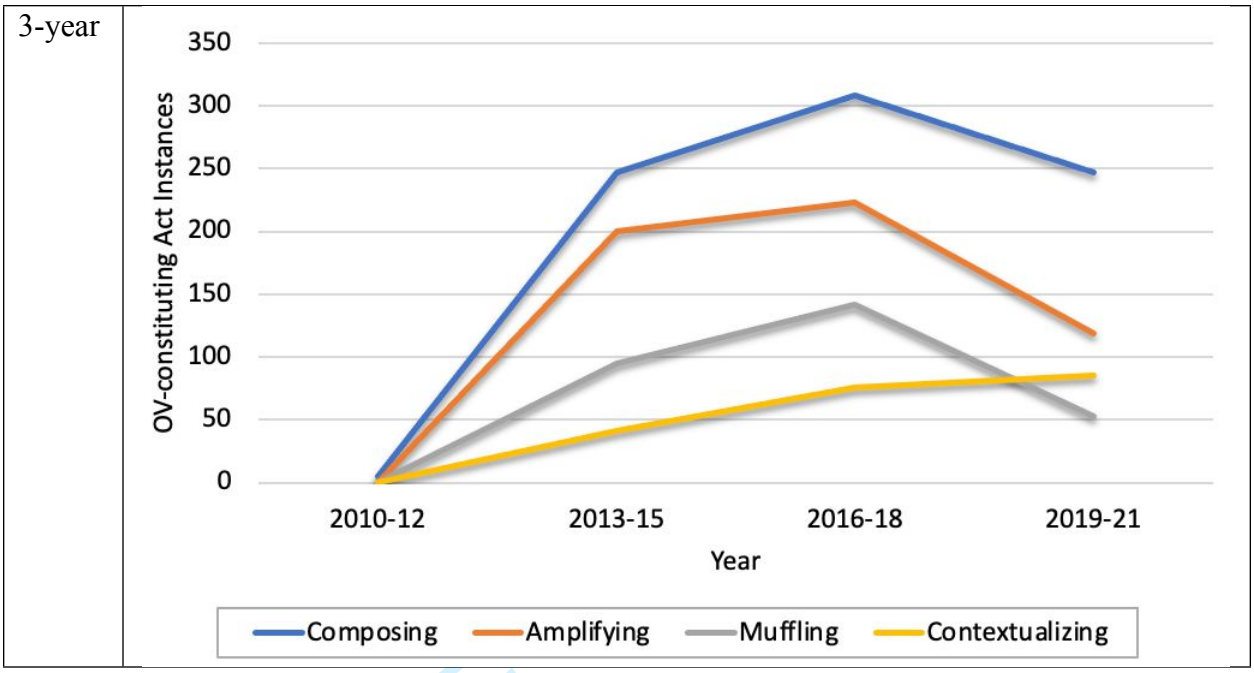

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table E2. Count of OV-constituting Act Instances

	Period 1				Period 2		Period 3		Period 4		Period 5	
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Composing	1	1	2	16	128	102	122	84	102	89	95	63
Amplifying				19	88	95	119	59	45	53	40	26
Muffling				5	37	54	79	28	35	33	8	12
Contextualizing				1	17	23	28	18	30	28	38	19
Year Total	1	1	2	41	270	274	348	189	212	203	181	120
Period Total	45				544		537		415		301	

Source(s): Authors' own work

Appendix F: Implications of Our Theory Extension from a Configurational Theory Perspective

Notably, our typology opens opportunities for configurational research (Park *et al*., 2020). Several configurations of constituting acts may exist within the OVs that facilitate technology diffusion. In one configuration for a widely diffused technology, composing may matter most, whereas in another, amplifying and muffling may be the determining factors. Across many

configurations, muffling, surprisingly, may play a key role—it may draw considerable attention to the OV.

In addition to configurational approaches, examining each contributing act alone will also prove useful in understanding technology diffusion in the digital age. For instance, an OV with rich, contextualized adoption and use cases may significantly appeal to prospective users, resulting in faster and wider diffusion of the technology. Overall, our typology lays a foundation for a better understanding of technology diffusion in the digital age.

The subtleties in the uncovered evolutionary trends (Figure 4) also have implications for diffusion research—again, most notably through configurational approaches. The accuracy of OV theory in understanding diffusion will increase not by focusing solely on the overall evolutionary trend, but by delving into the nuanced configurations of OV-constituting acts over time. To illustrate, Wang (2008) showed similar overall evolutionary trends (i.e., right-skewed shapes) between the BPR (Business Process Reengineering) OV and the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) OV; however, BPR turned out to be "a fad," whereas ERP proved to be "enduring, non-faddish" (Hirschheim *et al*., 2012, p. 60). Focusing solely on overall evolutionary trends does not help us understand why these different types of technology diffusion occurred. Overall, our nuanced evolutionary trajectories of OV-constituting acts lay a foundation for a deeper understanding of technology diffusion in the digital age.

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