Bannon: Core issues for CSCW

CSCW 2018

- This paper is older than some of you!
- A lot (too much) focus on terminology?
- But back then it was about more than words…

Bannon cont….

- Bannon's notion of direct/indirect collaboration… not really captured by our 2x2 matrix, yet it is important…

- Does he dislike the term groupware?
- What is a group? A group implies boundaries…

Bannon: 3 views on CSCW research... a continuum

1) Groupware developers – "strict constructionists"

2) Those seeking to improve technologies for work processes – "loose constructionists"

3) Social scientists –focused on understanding how groups work and how they use technology

3 Core Issues…

- Articulating cooperative work
- Sharing an information space
- Adapting the technology to the organization and vice versa

Articulation Work

Consists of all tasks needed to coordinate a particular task, manage subtasks, recover from errors and assemble resources

Can't always predict what is needed – continually need to negotiate and renegotiate

Shouldn't "automate a fiction"

Robinson's "double level language":

Systems need to support interactions at the formal level and informal (cultural) levels

A warning…

- Articulation work is the stuff people forget take so much time

- Articulation work is the stuff people forget they need technology to support

- Articulation work is sometimes the work managers don't appreciate

Sharing an information space

People prefer different problem solving strategies or heuristics

- Continually validating information produced by colleagues → hence a shared information space must be transparent

Decisions are based on a specific conceptual framework

- Information systems must capture the domain and mappings between different perspectives
- But organizations are not perfectly collaborative systems: Collaboration&Conflict   Overt&Covert

Therefore we need "bounded transparency"

- Info systems need to allow users consider what is revealed, when, to whom and in which form

Discussion point: Do we always benefit from transparency?

- Bannon suggests that we should always know where the "data" comes from and the context behind it, but is that important in all collaborative processes?

Designing socio-technical systems

Changes in technology induces changes in the work organization and social structure of the labor processes

The computer is an agent of change "par excellence"

Technology embodies – implicitly if not explicitly – assumptions on how the system will be used within the "work organization"

We need a theoretical framework to help us understand the complex interactions between technical subsystem, work organization and requirements of the task environment

Need to perform more detailed empirical studies – design incremental modifications to existing systems and observe their effects

Blog comments and discussion points

- OK, hard to read, rambles….

- The terms "collective, cooperative, and collaborative work" not that clearly defined [timchancscw]

- But for some the concepts resonated…

- **"The one versus the many"** [jongrandfield]

- We can borrow from other **philosophies** to think about this (Buddhism puts emphasis on the self, while Shintoism puts it on the importance of community)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW7aWKXB5J4

- What is this course really about? "what exactly are the differences between cooperative and individual work?" [Francisco Moon]

- "It remains questionable if the individual must be humans for CSCW." [superpenshine]

- Any implications on our course?

- How the authors referred to making conscious choices in **tool design** … and the consequences we may anticipate, as we cannot choose to have no impact [msmcleod]

- Provoked a rethinking of Wikis and Jira, for articulating cooperative work [timchancscw]

  - Is Jira (a ticket management system) sufficient at supporting articulation work?

  - Decisions and how they are stored can be **biased** – ways to avoid that? Wiki's may lose context.. Perhaps tools can't solve this but perhaps awareness of biases and developing approaches (such as member checking, expert review could!) [timchancscw]

- Tools that are used to support work articulation (or task allocation) can be **misused**, perhaps something Bannon didn't think about? [jakeroth]

- Slack nicely blends transparency and information sharing [jakeroth] (do you agree?)

- Can we think of examples of software that are not collaborative these days? [jeffmanke]

- What about **small organizations** that can't afford teams in house to design their collaborative technology – is there enough support for them? [alisong]