

# IN5500 oblig 3

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February 2020

This week we're focusing on "awareness" in CSCW. In this context it means that actors effortlessly pick up on cues around them and make practical sense of them.

## 1 The Problem with 'Awareness'

It had been previously argued in CSCW that 'awareness' which all actors in a system performs to some degree, is a passive activity. But Schmidt refers to the paper below, and argues that actors actively *monitors* their co-workers for cues, while also *displaying* work related cues for their co-workers to see.

It has also been claimed that no information can enter or leave our head without paying attention (Warren Thorngate). But actors can pick up information on a subconscious level.

Leaving both of the extreme awareness camps, we are in a grey area and can now ask meaningful questions regarding awareness.

## 2 Collaborative Activity and Technological Design: Task Coordination in London Underground Control Rooms

This paper is an empirical study of the (then) new underground control room in London.

There are two persons in the control room; controller and DIA. Controller controls all the trains in the underground. DIA does public announces to users of the underground. They are in the same room such that users can be alerted of schedules changes and delays as soon as they are discovered.

Yet these two actors does not usually communicate directly with each others. Instead they rely on indirect communication, over hearing what they are talking about and being aware what they are doing. Even when one needs to relay critical information, they refrain from direct communication, as not to be obtrusive; opting to hymn or ahem to get the other actors attention.

From this we can see that awareness is a rather active activity. And not only receptacle, there is also a *displaying* element. As they know certain information is useful for the other actor, they will put it on special display to make sure the other receive the information.