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1 Taking CSCW Seriously

This paper is both quite aged and timeless in a sense. The author Schmidt claims that this is not a proper introduction into the field of CSCW, yet this article was an excellent introduction for someone totally new to this field such as myself. This sharp contrast comes from the fact that the subject 'computer supported cooperative work' is already an integral part of our society, and despite it's age, retains it's relevancy to this day due to the authors meticulously precision in his definitions through the study.

The thesis of this paper is that we have to prepare for the future where computers are used in a cooperative setting. Work is inherently cooperative and computers are the future. It is not difficult to predict the significance further down the line. Of course there has already been attempts to integrate computers in work systems, but Schmidt argues that these have often failed because they were too restrictive due to their formality. Real cooperative work is not always a strictly defined group of people with clear communication paths. Any system with humans in them can't be strictly formal. The data in the computer system should also be as transparent as possible. That means including the author and the context for the given data, so as to prevent misinterpretation.

A question to the lecturer; in the first lecture you never gave a precise definition of CSCW, but rather said we would form our own meaning of the term. Is the entire course a CSCW? In the sense that we use computers to read the articles, write the reading notes, and hand in the notes. Before reading this paper I'd hardly consider a course CSCW, but the more I read, the more sure I became. In the first lecture you put emphasis on that this course was a collaboration with the other students and that we would have group discussions. The discussions are not computer supported, but everything else in the course is. Just food for thought