



# ISM SEMINAR

## Summer Term 2016-17

Speaker: **Professor Diane Bailey, University of Texas, Austin**

Title: The Co-Evolution of Objects and Boundaries: Materiality, Affordances, and the Communication of Knowledge in a Global Product Development Firm

Date: Wednesday 24 May 2017

Venue: 3.006, WBS

Time: 14:00

Abstract: Building on recent work suggesting that objects and boundaries co-evolve in practice, this paper theorizes the mechanisms for such co-evolution. We argue that organizations choose objects to use objects for cross-boundary collaboration because they believe they will afford certain types of communication. When the object's materiality makes it difficult to achieve that communication, other objects are used. New objects provide new affordances for communication, which moves new knowledge across the boundary. As knowledge changes people's work in practice, the boundary that separates them changes, often requiring the use of a new object with new affordances useful for communicating across the new boundary. We illustrate our emerging theoretical perspective on the co-evolution of objects and boundaries through a longitudinal study of a global product development organization. We discuss how our findings can lead to novel theorizing about the co-evolution of objects and boundaries, the role of materiality and affordances in this co-evolution, and the use objects in communicating knowledge across boundaries.

Biography: Diane E Bailey is Associate Professor in the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin, where she studies technology and work in information and technical occupations. Her current research interests include engineering product design, remote occupational socialization, big data in healthcare, and ICT4D. With an expertise in organizational ethnography, Professor Bailey conducts primarily large-scale empirical studies, often involving multiple occupations, countries, and researchers. She publishes her research in organization studies, engineering, information studies, and communications journals. She is the author, with Paul Leonardi, of the MIT Press book, *Technology Choices, Why Occupations Differ in Their Embrace of New Technology*. Professor Bailey has won teaching awards at UT Austin, Stanford University, and the University of Southern California. Her research has won best paper awards, a dissertation award, and an NSF CAREER award. She holds a PhD in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research from the University of California at Berkeley.

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