

Information Systems and Management (ISM) Forum

Autumn Term 2007

Speaker: Andrew Brown
Title: Discursive Identities and Productivity Rituals: a case study of a law firm
Date: Thursday 4 October 2007
Venue: Room B0.09, Warwick Business School, Scarman Road
Time: 14.30 – 16.00

Abstract: Predicated on an understanding that identities are linguistic constructions, this study analyzes aspects of people's individual and collective identity work. How individuals' identities are formed in relation to technology is a key aspect of IS research. Our theorizing is based on an in-depth interpretive case study with participants in a large UK-based regional law firm. The research contribution we make is threefold. First, we provide an analysis of the complex and somewhat contradictory discourses on which lawyers drew in formulating their conceptions of self which reveal the case organization as a polyphonic, politically contested discursive locale. Second, we show that while senior members of the organization exercised most influence over people's understandings of their organization's identity, all participants may be regarded as constituted by relations of power. Third, and arguably most importantly, we deploy the concept of 'ritual' to examine the discursive constitution of lawyers' identities, and analyze how their talk about technologically mediated ritually instantiated and negotiated identities served to produce and reproduce the organization.

Biography: Andrew Brown is Professor of Organization Studies at the University of Bath. His primary research interests focus on issues of organizational culture, identity, sense-making leadership and change.

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