



Digital Communication Conventions at Work

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- **Increase in the consumption of digital services.**
 - Emails: speed and simplicity for exchanging information¹
- **Beneficial effects for companies:**
 - Improvement of performance and productivity²
- **Negative consequences for employees:**
 - e.g. Mailbox saturation³, extension of working hours⁴
 - Psycho-social risks, anxiety, stress, etc...⁵
- **Saturation of the attentional, communicational and informational load of employees²⁻⁶⁻⁷**



1 - Sproull, L. and S. Kiesler (1991): 'Computers, networks and work'. *Scientific American*, vol. 265, no. 3, pp. 116–127.

2 - Mano, R. S., & Mesch, G. S. (2010). E-mail characteristics, work performance and distress. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(1), 61-69.

3 - Dabbish, L. A., & Kraut, R. E. (2006, November). Email overload at work: An analysis of factors associated with email strain. In *Proceedings of the 2006 20th anniversary conference on Computer supported cooperative work* (pp. 431-440).

4- Barley, S. R., Meyerson, D. E., & Grodal, S. (2011). E-mail as a source and symbol of stress. *Organization science*, 22(4), 887-906.

5- De la Rupelle, G., A.-M. Fray, and M. Kalika (2014): 'Messagerie électronique, facteur de stress dans le cadre de la relation managériale'. *Revue de gestion des ressources humaines*, no. 1, pp. 13–28.

6- Marsh, E., Vallejos, E. P., & Spence, A. (2022). The digital workplace and its dark side: An integrative review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 128, 107118.

7- Whittaker, S., Swanson, J., Kucan, J., & Sidner, C. (1997). Telenotes: managing lightweight interactions in the desktop. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)*, 4(2), 137-168.



Implementation of charters⁸ in certain organizations to standardize practices.

→ Not well known and even poorly followed⁹



Evolution of work and communication practices → nomadic workers¹⁰ :

- responsible for carrying, managing and reconfiguring their work resources wherever they are (e.g. within collaborator's organization, in public transports, in a third place...

8- Datchary, C., & Gaglio, G. (2014). Hétérogénéité temporelle et activité de travail. Entre conflits et articulations. *Revue d'anthropologie des connaissances*, 8(8-1).

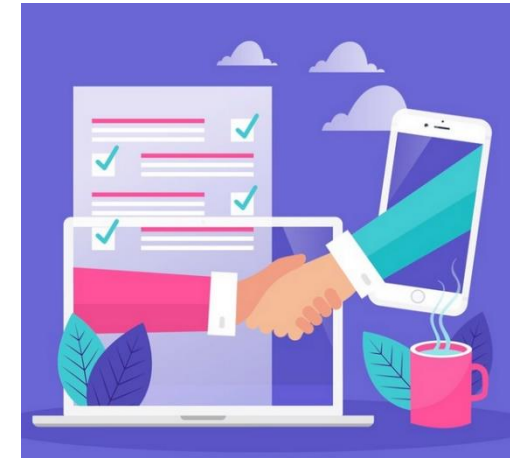
9 - Felio, C. (2015). Les stratégies de déconnexion des cadres équipés en TIC mobiles. *Nouvelle revue de psychosociologie*, (1), 241-254.

10 - Mark, G., & Su, N. M. (2010). Making infrastructure visible for nomadic work. *Pervasive and Mobile Computing*, 6(3), 312-323.



- Better understand how workers deal with the use of digital communication systems to articulate their work when they are nomadic workers.

- How to support the emergence, definition and evolution of conventions in order to improve the quality of life at work.





What is a Convention?



- Conventions $\neq$ norms $\neq$ charters
- **Charters:**
 - *“Solemn writing which was intended to record rights or settle interests”¹¹.*
 - Rules imposed by management or a hierarchy on what a person can or cannot do.
- **Norms:**
 - *« Social norms are typically conceived in the social sciences as customary rules that constrain behavior by eliciting conformity¹²”.*

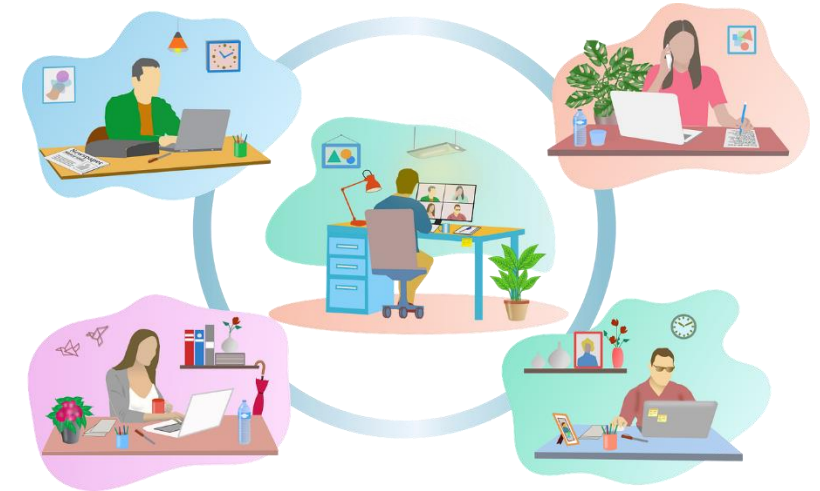
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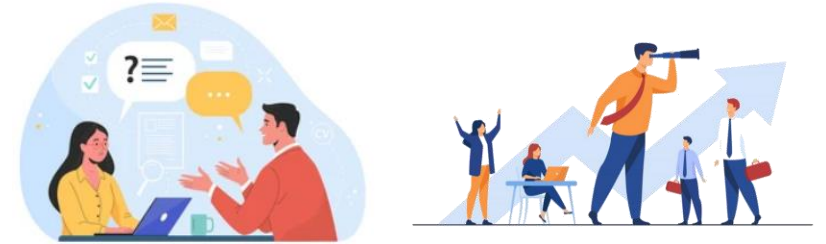
- Definition:
 - « *a generally accepted custom, practice or belief* » (Wulf & Mark, 1997).
 - « *agreements among group members on methods for local control of a computer system for performing work* » (Mark, 2002).
 - « *shared agreement and related practice that is either established or consolidated by usage* » (Cabitza & Simone, 2007).
- shared agreements and related practices, consolidated by usage reflecting the knowledge, mutual expectations and beliefs generally accepted by members of a group to support cooperation or resolve coordination problems.

- Q1: How workers deal with the use of digital communication systems to articulate their work?
- Q2: How can we collectively design and negotiate rules of good practices (conventions) for digital communication with nomadic workers when practices evolve?
- Q3: How can the implementation of these conventions for digital communication improve work and the quality of life at work?

- National public agency → small and medium-sized businesses
- Approximately 12 people including:
 - The director
 - Project managers
 - Communication manager
 - Assistant to the director
- Workplaces: shared offices, at home, within customer's organizations.



- Qualitative research methodology.
- Data collection techniques:
 - Semi-directed interviews.
 - Observations, shadowing.
 - Diaries.
 - Collection of activity traces: emails, instant messages, etc...
- Participatory design workshops





How does my thesis fits into the PILOT program?





- Work practices are transforming and evolving → nomadic workers.
 - Work practices may be maintained or change over time in long-term collaborations.
 - Propose a solution flexible enough to adapt to these evolving practices.
- A classification of conventions → to identify conventions.
 - Two approaches: establishing and making visible conventions.
- Provide a reflection on work practices.
- Enhance work-life balance and improve the quality of life at work.



Thanks for your attention!

Questions and comments?