



Center for
**LifeLong
Learning
& Design**

University of Colorado at Boulder

**Wisdom is not the product of schooling
but the lifelong attempt to acquire it.
- Albert Einstein**

Session 15

**Community and Organization:
“A Conceptual Understanding and IT Roles”**

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With

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Assignment:

1. Read “Editor’s preface” and “Homes, Housing and the 21st Century Prospects and Challenges” by Cantor, D. and Altman, I. in Arias. (ed) The Meaning and Use of Housing. Be prepared to discuss.
2. Read “Organization and Information“ by Arrow, K. in The Limits of Organization. Be prepared to discuss.
3. Visit the site: <http://www.cdi.org.br/> for the Case Study and be prepared to discuss..

Class exercise

- From previous session- Discuss “cognitive mapping of virtual environments” based on the Web site for the assignment <http://www.hotelpuntaislita.com/>

Slides Presentation – Notions of Community and Organization

Case Study – Introducing IT in Marginal Communities in Brazil

Slides Presentation –

Notions of Community and Organization: A Basis of Understanding

Initial Discussion from readings

1. What is a community? An organization?
 - Role of information? (Arrow)
 - Role of IT in context of the centripetal - centrifugal dialectic? (Altman)

Note: while we may not be able to get to draw or discuss all these relationships, please try to think about them.

Defining Notions of Community

Defining it

- the physical, mental and emotional places where people do their living
- “We all live someplace”
- More than the sum of their parts
- Tradition and transcendence – Integration into a set of existing core values new notions:
 1. Principles and values – conviviality and culture; health and well being; democracy
 2. Flexibility and adaptability – information and communication; education and learning; and economic equity, opportunity and sustainability

Some integral components (A.F.C. Wallace, 1952)

- social interaction and participation
- meaning – practice and interest
- Place and space (C. Alexander and M. Castells)
- rules and protocols – reward and punishment
- size and behavior – Manning theory – over / under(Gump, Barker and others)
- membership and fees
- boundaries and interconnections

- time and change
 1. history and futures – members as designers

Defining Notions Cont'd

Dynamics and evolution of community (Arias 1988)

- Settings
 2. “Fit” – “Is” ← “should”
 3. Objective and subjective (crime rates and perceptions of safety)
 4. User satisfaction – relative → problem
- Processes – Behavior
 - Decision making
 - Participation
 - Design and Learning
- Outcomes
 - Adoption and adaptation *by* the individual
 - Adaptation *of* the individual
 - Relocation of the individual

Types of Communities

- Social communities – COLE / Flavelas / Web chat spaces
- Communities of practice – Lynux / Smart Talk / VAT / IBM /
- Communities of interest – BCHCI / BASIN Types: Potential vs. Effective

Functions of communities

- Social interaction – love, self esteem, safety net,
- Share knowledge (tacit, complex)
- Produce and own knowledge
- Connect people, organization and institutions- “Citizens Corners,” BCHCI

Defining Notions of Organization

Definition is impossible

- Means of attaining the benefits of collective action when the price system fails – uncertainty (K. Arrow)

Variables defining organization (Galbraith, Hoffer, others)

- Product/market strategy
- Tasks
- People
- Structure
- Reward system
- Information & decision processes
- Performance

Types

- Formal organizations –
 1. firms, unions, government, universities
 2. ethical codes, market system (methods of communication / joint decision making)
- Informal organizations

1. families, neighborhoods
2. adhoc social groups

Defining Notions of Organization Cont'd.

Purpose – exploit the fact that most all decisions require the participation of many individuals for their effectiveness

- Informed participation
- Collaborative decision making, learning
 1. Use of notions such as symmetries of ignorance and asymmetries of knowledge

Information Technology and Community

Community is interaction

- Interaction –
 1. Movement – people, goods, services
 2. Communication – information
- Communication of information at the core of modern life

Need for thinking about new communities (Altman)

- Dynamics of the present and future
 1. Centripetal and centrifugal forces
- Old concepts of community → obsolete
 1. Exclusiveness, unchanging, isolated, monolithic, homogeneous
- New communities → Democratic problem solving
 1. People want to take charge (President's Council on Sustainability)
 2. Conscious → awareness (itself and its environment)
 3. Principle → equity
 4. Purpose → action oriented → sustainable

Information Technology Cont'd.

IT Roles

- Connect - access
 1. Friction
 2. Collaborative software
 3. Boundary objects - EDC
- Document
 1. Taxonomy of community
- Support
 1. Informed participation
 2. Information not disseminated is useless

Challenges (D. Schuler – New Community Networks, 1996)

- Concrete manifestation of democratic technology – the development of community computer networks
- Democracy is a tool for public deliberation and decision making – increasingly misunderstood, underused, irrelevant and blunt
- People have lost the skill and /or desire to wield the tool
 1. The future is not out there to be discovered - Communication infrastructure of tomorrow is being shaped today
 2. Informed participation and Designers - It is critical that people from all walks of life play active roles in this transitions period

Conclusion –Discussion Impacts and Case

Toward balance in a centripetal-centrifugal dialectic (I. Altman, 1993)

- Centripetal forces – unifying and communal processes
 1. Small Talk”
 2. Web
 3. TV
- Centrifugal forces – pushing toward individuality, uniqueness, and distinctiveness
 1. Microsoft law suit
 2. Religion, ethnicity, nationalism – long standing political and social divisiveness
 3. Kosovo

Be able to discuss relationships of these notions with other concepts and technologies discussed in our course such as:

- Design
- informed participation
- collaborative learning
- consumer vs. designer argument
- games and simulations

- the books that you are reading

Case Study – Leo Burd

Bringing computers to low-income communities: Democratization and Information Technologies in Brazil." This is a case study based on the experience of the Committee for Democratization of the Information Technologies (CDI) in "flavelas."

References

- Schuler, D. (1996) *New Community Networks*
- Illich's article on Learning Webs
- Manuel Castells, "The reconstruction of social meaning in the space of flows", in R.T. LeGates and F. Stout's *The City Reader*. London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 493-498.
- Schön, D; Sanyal, B.; and Mitchell, Wm. (eds.) (1998) *High Technologies and Low Income Communities*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
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- Jacobs, J. (1961) *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Hirschman, A.O. (1970) *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
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