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Connecting through Smartphones and Open Doors:

A Spatiotemporal Perspective on Communication Technologies at Work

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Abstract

Our discipline has long regarded the study of time and space, termed proxemics and chronemics respectively, as vital to communication scholarship. While the socio-cultural influences on time and space are particularly well established, recent scholarship suggests that there are other ways in which time and space are relevant for communication scholarship. Notably, Castells and colleagues (2007) theorize about how societal shifts associated with new communication technologies find us collectively experiencing a *space of flows* and a *timeless time*. Indeed, they argue that these new communication processes associated with space and time are key to the emergence of the network society. In the following paper, we elaborate on Ballard and Seibold's (2003) notion of *separation*, conceived as a measure of spatiotemporal connection, or availability, among organizational members. To that end, we briefly consider four types of spatiotemporal enactments—*connecting*, *commuting*, *screening*, and *separating*—achieved through a variety of workplace technologies. Our discussion illustrates the ways in which organizational members' traditional enactment of the "open door" as a symbol of connection and competence (indicated by one's ability to be productive while being everpresent and available) has become typified by the Smartphone in a network society.

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Expressions of support that “I am here for you,” and frustrated directives to “Leave me alone,” as well as commonly used discursive formations like the “open door policy” and “interruptions” by colleagues at work all point to an implicit understanding of the role of spatiotemporality in the most fundamental of communication processes. In the first example, we do not necessarily mean being *here* for a troubled friend in the physical sense, yet the expression of spatial presence stands in as a message of support, as does the temporal availability implied in *being* in that metaphorical space for him or her (here taking the form of “am,” the first person present singular form of “be”). Similarly, to *leave someone alone*—which requires our absence in time and/or space—is just another way of saying that we are purposely not communicating with them. Moreover, an *open door* policy refers to the lack of spatial and temporal boundaries concerning the discussion of work-related matters, and *interruptions* only exist in settings where certain spatial and temporal boundaries can be found—otherwise it would simply be communication.

Our discipline has long regarded the study of time and space, termed proxemics and chronemics respectively, as vital to communication scholarship. As any introductory communication textbook aptly illustrates, we take for granted that “time talks” (Hall, 1983) and “space speaks.” While the socio-cultural influences on time and space are particularly well established (if the language metaphors are less so [McGlone, 1998, 2007]), recent scholarship suggests that there are other ways in which time and space are

relevant for communication scholarship. At the micro level, Cooren and Fairhurst (2004) theorize about how speech *timing* and *spacing*—through the organizational closures created by human and nonhuman interactants—shape what gets done collectively in organizations. While this is a notable disjuncture from the ways in which we typically think of time and space (as material dimensions), the inherent sense of the *when* and the *where* we communicate as “communicating” is preserved—in this case, the level of analysis is organizational members’ discourse. At the macro level, Castells and colleagues (2000; Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qui, & Sey, 2007) theorize about how societal shifts associated with new communication technologies find us collectively experiencing a *space of flows* and a *timeless time*, where space is defined by the content of communication flows within a network and where the sequencing of social action is disturbed through the compression of time, respectively. Indeed, Castells and colleagues argue that these new communication processes associated with space and time are key to the emergence of the network society, owed to the fact that “time and space are the fundamental, material dimensions of human existence” (Castells et al., 2007, p. 171).

As a complement to these important micro and macro perspectives on time and space in communication scholarship, we offer a meso perspective routed in organizational members’ practices. It aligns with Cooren and Fairhurst’s (2004) interest in how work gets accomplished via human and nonhuman interactants, and Castell and colleagues’ (2007) interest in the emergence of new forms of time and space associated with communication technologies. Our interest is explicitly on the sociomaterial practices (Orlikowski, 2007) located—spatially and temporally—both “inside” and “outside” the boundaries of work. Specifically, we elaborate on Ballard and Seibold’s

(2003) notion of *separation*, conceived as a measure of spatiotemporal connection, or availability, among organizational members. To that end, we briefly consider four types of spatiotemporal enactments—*connecting*, *commuting*, *screening*, and *separating*—achieved through a variety of workplace technologies (Ballard & Seibold, 2003; Ballard, 2007; Ballard & Gosset, 2008). Our discussion illustrates the ways in which organizational members' traditional enactment of the "open door" as a symbol of connection and competence (indicated by one's ability to be productive while being everpresent and available) has become typified by the Smartphone in a network society.

Rather than offering a technologically deterministic treatment of the Smartphone, we begin our discussion below by considering the sociomaterial practices associated with mobile communication technology across cultural settings. This comparative treatment underscores the global reach of mobile communication while showing how local improvisation is tied to the spatiotemporality of a given culture and context. Next, we examine mobile communication in the context of work in industrialized cultures through examples of four types of spatiotemporal enactments accomplished through a variety of workplace technologies. This analysis highlights the unique affordances of Smartphone use that are consistent with organizational values equating competence with the ability to be simultaneously available to others and highly productive. Our ultimate objective is to consider the importance of spatiotemporality with regard to communication processes, in general, and organizational communication processes, in particular, extending traditional notions of chronemics and proxemics scholarship.

Mobile Communication Across Cultures:
Separating and Connecting with Technology

While the number of mobile telephones in non-industrialized countries now exceeds that in industrialized regions (indicating a global pattern of adoption), the form of use varies widely based on cultural differences (indicating opportunities to explore local improvisation) (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qui, & Sey, 2006). We argue that this local improvisation is driven, in part, by distinct spatiotemporal cultures and group norms (Ballard & Seibold, 2003). To interrogate our claim, we adopt a sociomaterial perspective that conceives of humans and technologies as being constitutively entangled in practice (Orlikowski, 2007). From a view of *constitutive entanglement*:

Humans are constituted through relations of materiality—bodies, clothes, food, devices, tools, which, in turn, are produced through human practices.

The distinction of humans and artifacts, on this view, is analytical only; these entities relationally entail or enact each other in practice.

(Orlikowski, 2007, p. 1438)

Orlikowski's focus on how humans and artifacts relationally enact the other is consistent with Ballard and Seibold's (2003) theoretical framework detailing the communicative constitution of temporal experience at cultural, organizational, group, and individual levels and evidenced in enactments and construals of time (Ballard, 2007; Ballard & Gossett, 2007). Of specific interest here is the enactment of *separation*. Ballard and Seibold (2003) theorized the enactment of separation in organizational contexts as an index of the degree to which extraneous factors are eliminated or engaged in the completion of a work task, and is evidenced in the physical and psychological protection

or availability of group members' time and often space. Under high levels of separation, extraneous factors are interpreted and discursively represented as unwelcome interruptions. Screening behaviors, including closing the door or not answering the phone, are common in these settings. Low levels of separation—i.e., high connectivity—are evident in practices like the open door, discursively or literally used to communicate less restricted spatio-temporal norms. Outside of work, separation operates in a similar fashion. It is signaled in spatial and temporal barriers to interaction, whereas connection is signaled in the removal of the same barriers as a way of facilitating interaction.

Varied levels of separation/connection are reflected in the research on mobile communication around the globe. As Yu and Tng (2003) report, while certain features and usage patterns are shared universally, local values (Western or Japanese, in this instance) still account for a lot of differences in use. For example, Qui (2007) describes the emergence of Little Smart, a limited mobility service offered for the price of a landline, in China. Subscribers do not have access beyond city limits; however, the improved affordances in connectivity with social networks (family and friends) have given rise to exponential diffusion rates. Similarly, Rice and Katz (2003a) point out that earliest adopters of mobile phones in the developing world are the poorest segments of society. This suggests that the value of connectivity serves as a strong motivator, beyond the barrier of monetary cost. As Castells and colleagues (2007) assert, technology adoption is shaped by the potential that users perceive it offers.

In Western industrialized countries, mobile phone use is also consistent with local norms. De Gourney and Smoreda (2003) found that in France, despite the high rate of technology adoption, use patterns continue to reflect the same spatiotemporal values as in

the past—particularly, traditional customs limit exchanges outside of the family to prescribed times. Mobile phone use has been consistent with this norm. Through a comparative study of Finland (Helsinki), Japan (Tokyo), China (Hong Kong), and the US (Austin, TX), Jarvenpaa and Lang (2005) also found that users look to situational and contextual factors to inform their use patterns. Their study showed differences among different age groups and between individualistic and collectivistic societies. This individualistic/collectivistic difference might also explain the fact that Americans report being less willing to receive call from employer outside of working hours than are Chinese respondents: Americans report “use screening devices, such as pagers and caller ID, to maintain a separation between work and personal time [Caporeal & Xie, 2003]” (Castells et al, 2007, p. 177).

While the cultural comparisons across national boundaries (with regard to mobile communication) have slowly grown, one cultural group understandably absent from the technological adoption literature is the Amish. While this absence is logical—given their reputation for rejecting even the most basic of technologies (including the convenience of outside pockets on their clothes)—examining Amish discourse and practices concerning telephony, in general, and mobile telephony, in particular, highlights the centrality of separation and spatiotemporal values to mobile phone use (Kraybill, 2001, Kraybill & Hurd, 2006). Kraybill (2001) relates historically, “The telephone line was the first visible link to the larger industrial world—a real and symbolic tie that mocked Amish belief in separation from the world. Phones literally tied a house to the outside world and permitted strangers to enter the house at the sound of a ring” (p. 192). Concern with interruptions during business hours and disruptions in the natural flow of family rhythms

were among the reasons given for the ban on phones. Nonetheless, a compromise was eventually made due to church members' concerns about issues of safety (e.g., the ability to call a doctor or fire department). Thus, after 1940, telephone shanties (resembling an outhouse) began to appear in order to house a "community phone." While separation from the outside world is a classic value of their culture, separation within families and communities is the antithesis of Amish tradition, thus the community phone, located outside of the home, was palatable. Kraybill (2001) observes, "The Amish believe that a home phone separates but that a community phone integrates" (p. 196). Not surprisingly, then, mobile telephones are strictly forbidden due to their ability to invade home space. Mobile phones were expressly forbidden in their fall 2003 conference because, as one member notes, "When it's connected to a line it controls mobility" (Kraybill & Hurd, 2006, p. 217).

The references to connection and separation throughout the studies of mobile communication highlight the importance of time and space in groups' constitutive entanglement with technology. Castells and colleagues (2007) assert that, "Technological change, particularly change involving communication technology, critically affects spatiotemporal change, but the influence of technology does not act in isolation from broader sources of change" (p. 5). Castells (2001) brings these material dimensions together in his discussion of the space of flows and timeless time emergent with new communication technologies. We propose that when examining mobile communication, this relationship must be considered because groups' specific use of mobile communication reflects certain spatiotemporal goals. Below, we explicate a typology of spatiotemporal enactments through offering examples from a variety of workplace technologies, including mobile telephony. So far

the literature on workplace use is dominated by studies of Western, industrialized nations, therefore, our examples reflect this bias.

A Typology of Spatiotemporal Enactments:

Separating, Screening, Commuting, and Connecting at Work

Given the primacy of time and space in human communication (Hall, 1983) and especially mobile communication, we introduce here a typology of the various types of spatiotemporal enactments typified by distinct interaction genre repertoires (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994) and associated with the accomplishment of work in Western, industrialized organizations. Interaction genres are a “socially recognized type of communicative actions—such as memos, meetings, expense forms, training seminars—that are habitually enacted by members of a community to realize particular social purposes... A genre established within a particular community serves as an institutionalized template for social action—an organizing structure—that shapes the ongoing communicative actions of community members through their use of it” (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994, p. 542). They go on: “Members of a community rarely depend on a single genre for their communication. Rather, they tend to use multiple, different, and interacting genres over time. Thus to understand a community’s communicative practices, we must examine the set of genres that are routinely enacted by members of the community. We designate such a set of genres a community’s ‘genre repertoire’” (p. 542). Below, each genre repertoire—separating, screening, commuting, and connecting—is described in turn, as we consider four typical spatiotemporal enactments. Note that this is not a typology of technologies, but of various spatiotemporal enactments accomplished with a range of workplace technologies—from as low-tech as a

door to as high-tech as weblogging on a Smartphone. It illustrates how the same technology is appropriated in more than one way.

The Separating Genre Repertoire

Figure 1 depicts a typology that utilizes two dimensions—time (available or unavailable) and space (present or absent)—to arrive at four distinct spatiotemporal enactments, ranging from the least available to the most available. The least amount of availability is reflected in the *separating genre repertoire*, wherein individuals are present in space, or co-located with other colleagues, but unavailable in time. The classic communicative strategy to enact separating is simply closing one's door at the office (Ballard & Seibold, 2000; Hall, 1983). The history of this practice reflects the power relations associated with spatiotemporality, since higher-ranking organizational members are often the only persons with an office door to close. More typically, the majority of organizational members work in cubicles that prohibit this privileged door closing practice. Another practice—available regardless of office configuration, but rare in practice—is described in Perlow's (1997) study of a group of software engineers. She used "quiet time"—entire blocks of time wherein group members were not to interact with each other—as a tool to minimize constant interruptions and increase work productivity. Nonetheless, this is not a common technology, and even Perlow's group soon abandoned quiet time after she ended her study with the organization, despite the success of her intervention. Recently, some organizations have begun instituting "No Email Fridays" as a way to decrease the flow of messages and resultant problem of communication overload. This policy exists for co-located and teleworking colleagues the same. Whatever the technology, the practice of separating is appropriated to

protect time (despite the availability in space). Notably, this genre repertoire contains the fewest examples—compared to the other repertoires—which is reflective of cultural attitudes against separation in contemporary organizations.

The Screening Genre Repertoire

More accessibility is reflected in the *screening genre repertoire* (compared to the separating genre) wherein individuals are absent from others in space and desire access to asynchronous communication means in order to manage their time. As described previously, pagers and Caller ID were some of the earliest screening technologies (Castells et al., 2007). In the case of pagers, there is always a slight degree of asynchronicity, yet it is common for organizational members to return calls promptly. Caller ID permits members to selectively screen contacts, deciding in the moment whether or not to be available. Answering machines are less prevalent in the workplace (and elsewhere) today, but digital voice mail stands in as one way that individuals screen phone calls—on their landline or mobile phones. It is rare (if possible) to have a mobile phone without Caller ID, but certain numbers may not be recognizable. In this case, persons can capture the intended message and return the call at their temporal convenience (if at all). Finally, electronic mail (e-mail) can be used as an asynchronous media that permits individuals to screen out communication when they are unavailable. Often, however, enabled by “push” email and “pinging” by one’s email client, organizational members treat email as an almost synchronous communication media—in fact, when asked to indicate whether email is a synchronous or asynchronous technology, respondents categorize e-mail as synchronous (Jourdan, 2006). (Examples of this attitude are found in enactments of the commuting genre repertoire described below.) To

summarize, screening enactments are appropriated to help manage the ebb-and-flow of communication in time and space. Spatiotemporal enactments associated with commuting are described next.

The Commuting Genre Repertoire

A good deal of accessibility is reflected in the *commuting genre repertoire* wherein individuals are absent from others in space but desire to enact synchronously (or a close approximation of it) in order to signal their temporal availability to others. Often this physical absence is desired, as in the case of an arranged teleworking agreement, but this genre repertoire might also apply in a variety of other settings (Ballard & Gossett, 2007). The term commuting does not apply only to those in formal telecommuting situations, but is commonly enacted by members throughout the organization (Inman Ramgolam, 2007): This includes working from home at the end of day (after leaving the office), being on-call over the weekend, and being generally available after hours (despite the day or time). Independent contractors and freelancers often find themselves in this situation as well.

Commuting enactments include phoning into the office from home (and receiving phone calls at home) in order to facilitate availability from a fixed location as well as utilizing a mobile phone to facilitate availability from any location (including while traveling on business or on a family outing). Videoconferencing is a common means to connect virtual teams from around the globe. With the advent of Skype, this technology is widely available to organizations and individuals. Some groups even meet in Second Life to approximate the goal of the traditional videoconference. Organizational members also regularly use SMS (short message service) to facilitate availability from any location, and

last year *The Wall Street Journal* reported that instant messaging is now commonplace among work colleagues (Mamberto, 2007). Finally, in some corporate cultures, e-mail “fire drills” are commonplace as a means of decision-making (Ballard, 2007). A fire drill is used to hold meetings in lieu of face-to-face communication and is characterized by rapid fire back-and-forth among a group. Being unavailable during such a drill often leads to negative perceptions by others. Within a commuting genre repertoire, various technologies are appropriated to extend oneself in space while connecting with others in real time.

The Connecting Genre Repertoire

The greatest level of spatiotemporal availability is reflected in the *connecting genre repertoire*, wherein individuals are present in space and available in time. In his original treatment of monochronic and polychronic time, Hall (1983) wrote about office configuration as one of the most visible signs of culture. In polychronic cultures where connecting to people is afforded priority over task completion, office spaces are huge open rooms where all are welcome to congregate and interact at once. Short of this polychronic ideal, the open door has long been another cultural symbol of availability in many Western organizations. However, in an environment characterized by virtual teams, virtual organizations, independent contractors, and telework, the open door of yore has been replaced by the technological equivalent. For example, mobile phoning to micro-coordinate (Ling, 2004) en route to a meeting while on the same corporate campus or in the same vicinity is a familiar occurrence (Geser, 2006). Texting is also being used as a tool to strategize, and subversively change coalition strategies, during face-to-face meetings with co-located colleagues (Stephens, 2008). Colleagues with adjoining

cubicles are instant messaging each other as a means of collaborating among co-located colleagues at work (Schmitz-Weiss, 2008). Finally, during a 2008 SXSW (South by Southwest) Interactive Festival panel held to discuss the latest innovations in Web 2.0, several co-located members of the audience began microblogging on their Smartphones about how the panel was boring and ineffective (Wallace, 2008). In real time, a moderator informed the panelists of the feedback and the direction of the panel was changed immediately. The level of openness and connectivity achieved through the use of new communication technologies exceeds that of the open door (unless we plan to stay at the office twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week). The Smartphone affords exceptional access to spatiotemporal connecting—from phoning, to texting, to emailing, to using the internet to retrieve information, or to share information through microblogging. It offers an always on, always there capability not available in the past (Fortunati, 2002; Katz & Aakhus, 2004; Lee & Whitley, 2002) that extends from our work into our personal lives (Ballard, 2007). As such, it symbolizes the new open door characterized by a space of flows and timeless time. As Green (2002) describes, it enables a “boundary rearrangement” (p. 288) and as Castells and colleagues note, “it is this time-based (rather than space-based) organization of activities that defines ‘accessibility,’ leading to a redefinition of ‘public time’ and ‘private time’ into ‘on time’ and ‘off time’” (p. 176). Smartphones are appropriated not only to connect to others in real time (and all of the time) but sometimes in both real and cyber space, as the case with microblogging. For these reasons, we offer closer consideration of the spatiotemporality associated with the Smartphone below and query the cultural attitudes that are bound up with this technology.

Smartphones as the New Open Door

Katz and Rice (2002) observed that mobile communication and Internet usage have evolved together, suggesting that they represent broader communication patterns and practices. Similarly, based on nationally representative telephone surveys conducted from 1995 to 2000, Katz and Rice (2002) reported that 12 billion text messages were sent worldwide to PCs, PDAs, and mobile phones—a range of communication technologies and forms—on a monthly basis. Current estimates are that 2.9 billion text messages are sent each day (<http://www.itfacts.biz/index.php?id=P3751>). The convergence of these technologies is found in the Smartphone, a technology on the rise in industrial work contexts. Smartphone unit sales almost tripled from 2004 to 2005, and increased by 50% in the first half of 2006 over 2005 (<http://www.in-stat.com>). In 2008 alone, in the US, there has been a 9.1% increase in unit sales (Gartner Research, 2008) that may equate to approximately \$8 billion dollars in sales revenue (McGlaun, 2008). During the same time, unit sales for Europe (UK, Germany, France) have grown 5% (Gartner Research, 2008). *The Wall Street Journal* reports that South Korea has even eased its rules so that BlackBerry devices can be sold by its largest cellular carrier, creating “a crack in one of the most closed and expensive cell-phone markets in the world” (Ramstad, 2008, p. B1). Not to be outdone, *Time Magazine* named Apple’s iPhone as the Best Invention of 2007 (Grossman, 2007). The Smartphone has far reaching implications for the way that we enact separation and connection—two the most fundamental aspects of human communication. As such, this particular form of integrated, mobile communication merits attention as a distinctive sociomaterial practice.

Scholars have variously described mobile communication as reflecting and enabling *perpetual contact* (Katz & Aakus, 2002), *presence absence* (Fortunati, 2007) as well as *network time* (Hassan, 2007). Additionally, a prominent practitioner and researcher described the phenomenon of *continuous partial attention* (Stone, 2008) to describe our ability to be always on, but only half present, despite our physical location. These characterizations all point to various spatiotemporal aspects of mobile communication. Fortunati (2007) sums them up well, where he describes:

The mobile, much more than the fixed phone, makes it possible to speak and do various actions at the same time as it being used: walking, driving, and so on. Doing more than one thing at a time allows you to live a double or triple life, even if this obviously raises your level of stress. The mind gets used to spreading attention in various directions. Certainly it is less brilliant attention, more opaque, but it enables people to cope with multiple actions. (p. 517)

If the mobile phone enables a triple life, then what about uses of the Smartphone version of the mobile phone?

In *Technics and Civilization*, Lewis Mumford (1934) declared that: “The clock, not the steam engine, is the key-machine of the modern industrial age. For every phase of its development the clock is both the outstanding fact and the typical symbol of the machine: even today no other machine is so ubiquitous” (p. 14). Today, this statement might be updated by replacing “modern” with a term like “network-based,” and one might well substitute personal communication technologies (PCTs) or information communication technologies (ICTs) in place

of “clock.” We argue that, in the contemporary global landscape, communication, connection, and connectivity, rather than time clocks and conveyor belts are the new “zeitgebers,” or time givers. Castells (2000) observes, “previous linear, irreversible, measurable, time is being shattered in the network society.... The transformation is profound: it is the mixing of tenses to create a forever universe, not self-expanding but self-maintaining, not cyclical but random, not recursive but incursive: timeless time, using technology to escape the context of its existence, and to appropriate selectively any value each context could offer to the ever-present” (pp. 463-464). Other scholars have described this same phenomenon of a network-based spatiotemporal regime (Caporael & Xie, 2003; Green, 2002; Hassan, 2007; Lee & Whitley, 2002; Leccardi, 2003; Rosa, 2003; Sabelis, 2007; Towers, Duxbury, Higgins, & Thomas, 2006).

While this is true of mobile communication, in general, the unique qualities of the Smartphone—i.e., the range of spatiotemporal affordances it offers as means of connection—makes it especially likely to be used as a means of perpetual contact in organizational (and other) cultures that value connection. Orlikowski (2007) writes about the sociomateriality of the BlackBerry in a company she is currently studying. Ironically, she notes that the organization prides itself on being family-friendly and committed to work-life balance for its members. As part of that commitment, they issued BlackBerrys to all investment and senior support staff. In the course of her analysis, she found it difficult to describe members’ communication practices using established ‘media use’ terminology. Importantly, terms from that literature could not account for the

ways in which participants' communication practices had been changed by their adoption of the Smartphone. Orlikowski (2007) recounts:

All members report expecting that others will be available via their BlackBerrys, and most assume that these others expect the same of them. As one partner observed: 'We all have BlackBerrys, so you know that everybody is seeing the traffic.' When such expectations are enacted in practice, they are reinforced over time, becoming intrinsically bound up with the device, and shifting how people think and act with it. A senior associated noted: 'In general...people's expectations levels have gone up...People presume that it's fairly easy to reach you 24/7. (p. 1442)

Orlikowski goes on to report a great deal of interview data that supports this general finding, including participants' use of the term CrackBerrys to indicate their awareness of stark, even compulsive, changes in their spatiotemporal enactments since beginning use of the device. One person reports: "You're sort of constantly tied. Here's an example. I'll be working sometimes on a deal that we're in the throes of and working pretty hard. And...I'll have my BlackBerry for the some reason by my bed and my wife will wake up at three or four in the morning and I'll be checking my BlackBerry or sending [emails]. Yeah, it's that sort of addictive" (p. 1443).

Orlikowski's (2007) findings highlight the constitutive entanglement of people with technologies based on the technical affordances of a device. Campbell and Russo's (2003) study of the social construction of mobile technology sheds light on why the development of norms around those

affordances are such a strong force with which to be reckoned. They found that personal communication networks (such as what occurs in a work group or group of friends) predicted mobile phone use patterns, including comfort with technology, attitudes about use in public, microcoordination, and hypercoordination. Additionally, interview data showed that social interaction contributed to perceptions and use of mobile phones in four areas: adoption, attitudes about products and services, perceptions of non-normative use, and collective use. Taken together, these findings suggest that we become constitutively entangled, in part, through our social networks.

Summary

Our objective in this paper was to consider the importance of spatiotemporality with regard to communication processes, in general, and organizational communication processes, in particular. Our discipline has long regarded the study of time and space as vital to communication scholarship. However, we have often held limited conceptions of the ways that time and space function in basic communication processes. As part of extending traditional notions of chronemics and proxemics scholarship, we centered on two novel aspects of time and space in communication: Castells (2000) treatment of the space of flows and timeless time indicative of a network society and Ballard and Seibold's (2003) discussion of the spatiotemporality enacted in everyday organizational practices. In this paper, we extended Ballard and Seibold's (2003) construct of *separation* through developing a typology of spatiotemporal enactments typified in various interaction genre repertoires—*connecting, commuting, screening, and separating*. This led us to highlight the role of the Smartphone in the emergence of the network society,

owed to its unique instantiation of the space of flows and timeless time. We considered organizational members' constitutive entanglement with the Smartphone as a 24/7 substitute for the open door found in the traditional workplace. Ultimately, we hope to stimulate theorizing and research on the role of time and space in the twenty-first century, challenging accepted notions of spatiotemporality and communication.

Figure 1

Typology of Spatiotemporal Enactments by Genre Repertoire:

Examples of Workplace Technologies

		Space	
		Present	Absent
Time	Availability	<p>“CONNECTING” GENRE REPERTOIRE</p> <p>Open Door to offer availability to others</p> <p>Mobile Phoning to micro-coordinate en route to a meeting</p> <p>Texting to communicate with co-located colleagues during meetings</p> <p>Instant Messaging to collaborate with co-located colleagues at work</p> <p>Weblogging to convey feedback at a public event</p> <p>APPROPRIATED TO CONNECT TO OTHERS IN REAL TIME AND (REAL OR CYBER) SPACE</p>	<p>“COMMUTING” GENRE REPERTOIRE</p> <p>Phoning to facilitate availability from a fixed location</p> <p>Mobile Phoning to facilitate availability from any location</p> <p>Videoconferencing to link virtual teams</p> <p>Texting to facilitate availability from any location</p> <p>Instant Messaging to collaborate with colleagues away from work</p> <p>E-mailing to hold (fire drill) meetings in lieu of FTF</p> <p>APPROPRIATED TO EXTEND SPACE AND CONNECT IN REAL TIME</p>
		Unavailable	<p>“SEPARATING” GENRE REPERTOIRE</p> <p>Closed Door to decline availability to others</p> <p>“Quiet Time” to prevent interruptions</p> <p>“No Email Fridays” to limit the flow of information</p> <p>APPROPRIATED TO PROTECT TIME</p>

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