

**Research Project Workshop: A case for analysis, theorising, and reporting**

Information Systems Research & Dissertation

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Allen Higgins

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**Introduction**

- Background
- Industry experience?
- Research experience?

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**Overview**

- Engage in two activities of qualitative research
  - 1. coding
  - 2. reporting
- Data consists of interview and discussion transcripts
- Theoretical starting point (cultural analysis of organisation)
- Familiarisation with data
- Analysis
- Reporting

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### Learning outcomes

- Researchers will employ selected coding techniques and experience a process of theory development based on data interpretation and analysis.
- Researchers will develop a deeper understanding of the complexity of qualitative, interpretive organisational and sociological enquiry.

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### Workshop reflection

*"Analysis is the interplay between researchers and data."  
(Strauss & Corbin, 1998)*

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### T: A theoretical starting point: Ciborra's 'Hospitality'

**"hospital.ity**, n. Friendly & liberal reception of guests or strangers; *afford me the h. of your columns, put my letter in.* [f. OF *hospitalité* f. L *hospitalitatem* (as HOSPITAL, see -TY)]"



Image from <http://www.wordle.net/>

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**T: Actors' commitments reflect different understandings**

The old commitments as dictated by systems development methodologies	The new commitments dictated by hospitality
Strong identity and advocacy	Define identity in a plastic way depending on the guest(s)
Enforce boundaries, standards, roles	Cross boundaries, test standards and roles
Be rational	Care
Seek consensus	Be the server
Be in control of the tool	Release control
Measure	Listen
Compare, learn and improve	Share
Be in control of unexpected consequences	Be open to mysteries and ambiguities (negative capability)

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**T: A cultural theory for organisation**

Theoretical implications	Research implications
By hosting a new tool or technology, we reinterpret our identities.	Individuals relate, recall and reflect on themselves and others (including technology); their reputation, identities, how they change.
Hosting the new technology will involve learning by doing and improvisation.	Meeting, interaction, is the crucial event. Observe or recall moments of play, breakdown or problem solving. Note lingo, old/new language or terms.
During the hosting process, technology can drift.	Does 'meaning' shift? Record or recall understandings and practices over the entire process.
Hospitality involves moods and emotions.	Observe or recall mood, feeling, expressions, passions, affective language. Is culture present, repressed, visible, impinged? Is technology implicated in this?
Hospitality is about appropriation and care.	Technology-in-use, tools, structures; Observe mundane activity, what is taken for granted, routine? How shallow or deep is it taken in?
Hospitality involves cultivation	Processes of interaction and change along the life of the innovation. Developer's or engineer's actions; technology fixed or in flux? How is change negotiated (or not), processes of development.
We cannot forget the dubious character of technology: technology can become an enemy.	Record contradictions and the unexpected, redraw boundaries, successes/failures, enhancement/incursions, benefit/loss, injury, empowerment.

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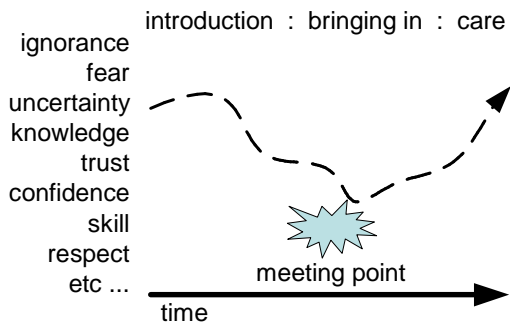
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**T: Hospitality's dynamics**



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**T: Speculate:**

- What evidence might support Ciborra's claims that 'hospitality' is an underlying social process and 'lens' through which we all experience organisational change?
- the phenomenon described by Ciborra may be evident in individual and collective narratives, story telling & explanation.
- sample statements (phrases or words) you think could be indicative or evidence of this kind of cultural knowledge...

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**A0: Activity: word associations. As many ideas as possible**

Work on activity alone, then in pairs to compare what you've done.


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**A0: Research theme: sensitizing concepts**

meeting	change	introduction	hostile	friend
develop	we	they	engineer	I
gift		appearance	system	
enemy	technology	threshold		objects
	manage		exchange	stranger
guest	outside	strangeness	share	Visit
	fear		uncertainty	delivery
care	rude	implement	instruction	
innovation		visitor	procedure	invite
inside	Host	control	infect	language

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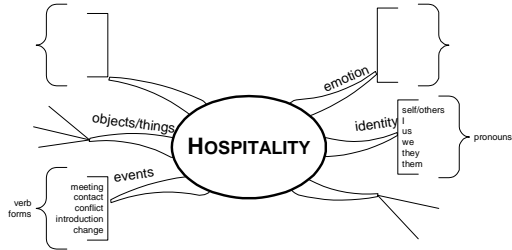
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### A0: Ideas for coding Ciborra's theory



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10" break

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### T+D: Data gathering

- data gathering implies a prior theory of what constitutes knowledge
- this study was designed in the Interpretive tradition
- the approach emphasises subjectivity in contexts of organisations and social structures
- semi-structured interviews
- observations
- documents

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**D: The data**

The field data was gathered during a study into the adoption of a new software development framework in one organisation over a particular period by a particular group of people.

We posit that evidence for the phenomena we are concerned with will be evident in the speech and reflections of those people recorded during the study.

Interviews were conducted in 2001 over the period from April through to June.

Interviews and discussions were recorded on audiotape and transcribed afterwards.

The participant company, project teams, individuals and other features are anonymised to remove identifying references.

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**D: Case Site: New Hanoi Technology**

- 1993 Digital Equipment Corporation (Digital) closed its Irish assembly plants. Loss of 780 skilled jobs in Galway
- NHT was a start-up in the wake of Digital's closure
- New Hanoi Technology founded 1994
- Open Standards based Prime Broker Suite, an interoperable FX Trading platform
- Development organised using the Digital Development Process (DDP), for managing software projects
- DDP became unworkable as they passed 100 employees (1998)
- NHT's product delivery pipeline broke down
- Next version release dates slipped
- Quality suffered
- Employee burnt out, ill health, absenteeism, and exhaustion

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**D: Extreme Programming (XP) crept onto the scene in 1998**

- Coding Standards; Small Releases; Metaphor; Simple Design; Testing; Continuous Integration; The Planning Game; Pair Programming; Collective Ownership; 40 Hour week; On-site Customer; and Refactoring
- Trialled by one development team, then another, then another
- NHT organisation dropped DDP and adopted XP approach for product development and maintenance
- Interviews conducted in 2001 over the period from April through to June

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### Analysis...

"I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously - I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason."

John Keats, 1817

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### T+M: Interpreting texts

Methodologically, the interpretation of texts implies a hermeneutic epistemology and an interpretive community making sense of texts and the role of 'text' in all its many forms.

For this study we assume the following basic theoretical stance; that *we gain access to social (and organisational) phenomena through language*, in particular through spoken discourse.

Other forms of discourse, communication and expression may also be important (written texts, visual artefacts, music, symbols, movement, sensation, etc).

In this unit we primarily we address speech, and analyse it through transcripts of interviews; spoken discourse is our data.

We should be aware however that nothing is ever simply 'as it seems'.

Social (and particularly Organisational) research is *value laden* and should always be *power aware* because of asymmetries and difference; privilege, class, gender, race, education, economic, age, language, ethnicity etc.

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### T+M: Exercises with the interview data

- Content analysis is based on an intuitive assumption that words are important, and that the more often a word is used, the more useful and important it is.
- Language analysis is rooted in the idea that the way language is used represents shared structure, or less strongly, the availability of structure we might reproduce to effect action, make sense, and carry meaning.
- Interpretive analysis addresses meaning (intended and but also unintended) in speech, texts, images, etc. Actual words and representations are important, but so too is their use; through genres or patterns of use, in actual utterances or statements, and its intended meaning and what is left implicit or unsaid. Interpretive research may also question its own role and power to value or represent some things over others.

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**M: Research methods**

- Content analysis
  - Identify certain phrases/ words, count and analyze the frequencies and recurring patterns
  - Selection of key phrases/ words depend on the hypothesis of the researcher
- Grounded analysis
  - Practical approach to analyze non-standard data
  - Read & re-read, question, highlight, conceptualize, categorize, question, theory formation and constant assessing
- Narrative & Discourse analysis
  - Analysis of natural language data
  - Narrative structure in discourse (or narratives) biographies, myths, events, episodes. Expressing norms, beliefs, values
  - Identity in discourse, contradiction, dilemmas, argument

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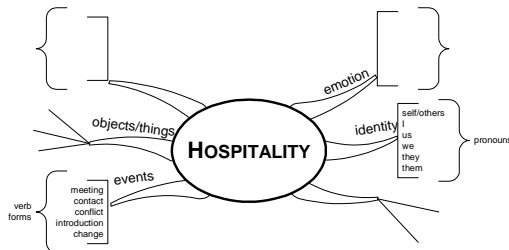
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**T: Recall ideas for coding or framing Ciborra's theory**



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**T+M: Unpack the research question**

- Culture; identity pronouns and personal pronouns.
- What does this sort of analysis give us?
- Why pronouns
- What about care/emotions/exclamations
- What about past tense/ future tense/ continuous, present tense

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**A1: Content analysis**

We used the ATLAS.ti<sup>[1]</sup> word cruncher to generate the following word frequency report from the transcripts of 12 interviews and one group discussion.

[1] ATLAS.ti is a software package supporting qualitative data analysis. Two quantitative functions are supported, SPSS export and Word Cruncher. Word Cruncher performs quantitative processing of textual data (primary documents). Word occurrence frequency can be generated from individual documents or aggregated over an entire collection of primary documents.

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**A1: Word Cruncher**

Overall <sup>1</sup>	Count	Nouns <sup>1</sup>	Count	Pronouns <sup>1</sup>	Count
the	1507	we, we**	769	we, we**	769
to	883	I, I**	475	I, I**	475
we, we**	769	XP	324	you, you**	302
a	707	you, you**	302	they, they**	283
of	673	they, they**	283	our	106
that	592	test, tests, testing	187	them	72
and	581	engineer, engineers	180	us	54
it	508	this	162	your	53
I, I**	475	feature, features	140	their	48
is	428	people	138	who	42
in	383	customer	127	my	24
XP	324	work	125		
you, you**	302	our	106		
they, they**	283	time	105		
on	269	team	101		
have	257	product	77		
for	247	them	72		
are	236	project	70		
be	198	SW	68		
think	196	management	61		
with	194				
				*1, Tot words	29,636

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**A1: Commentary: What good is simple content analysis?**



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**10" break**

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**Method...**

*Methodology:* A way of thinking about and studying social reality  
*Methods:* A set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analyzing data  
(Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

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**M: Grounded theory method**

- Grounded theory method is an analytical approach proposed by scholars schooled in the ethnographic tradition. It has been employed to access and analyse workplaces, societal and social settings.
- Microscopic examination of data
- Asking questions, making comparisons
- Starts with line by line
  - Labelling
  - Conceptualising (abstracting from labels)
  - Memos (researcher's thoughts and reflections – line by line)
- Grounded theory method, three processes
  - Open coding
  - Axial coding
  - Selective coding

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**A2: Text: 'is it just me?'**

**Fergus:** Is pair programming accepted now (?) Has everybody bought into that (?) It's the one practice that I'm not sold on (.) I can see benefits (.) however (.) I'm nervous about it (.) things like personalities (.) things like people's programming habits (.) and people being people (.) It can be tricky (.) I'm just nervous about it (.) If it works I can see it being very beneficial (.) so does it become a matter of policy (.) Can you override it and say "no! don't want to pair program on this piece of work (.) I want to do this by myself" (.) would that be frowned upon because maybe some people would always want to work on their own (?) I just want to say that I'm a bit nervous about pair programming (.) is anybody else nervous about pair programming or is it just me (?)

See TEXT: Group discussion line 300

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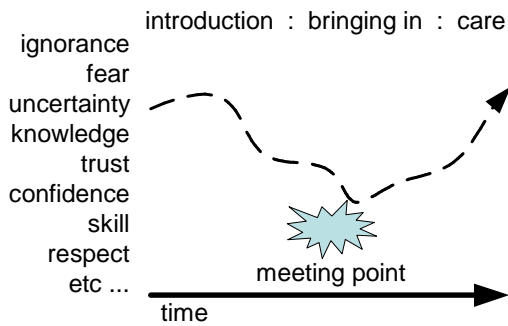
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**T: Hospitality's phenomena (Ciborra's hypothesis)**



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**T+M: Reconsider evidence of identity?**

In spoken and written discourse pronouns substitute for nouns and noun phrases (e.g. pair programming).

Personal pronouns

'I', 'me', 'you', 'our', 'we', 'us', 'they', 'them', 'their'.

Instances of pronoun use might indicate the speaker's perception of identity and group membership.

Possessive pronouns such as 'my', 'our', 'your', 'their', may be indicators of a speaker's identification of self, group markers, others, and 'otherness' more generally.

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**A2: Activity**

In pairs

For the text 'is it just me';

highlight the personal pronouns used by Fergus.

List the personal pronouns

Comment on how they are used.

Consider some of the following questions:

Q: Whom do the pronouns refer to (speculate)?

Q: How are pronouns used in this text?

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**A2: Activity Notes**

*Everybody: x: Group (programmers or larger organisational group?)*

*I'm (I am): xxxx: Personal. A statement x. A feeling xxx.*

*I: xxxx: Personal, declarations, personal hypothetical statements*

*People's: x: Possessive, collective (implied individual?), group programmers?*

*People being people: x: Idiomatic*

*You: x: Third person (personal conjecture)*

*Frowned upon: x: Implied third party? Group norm or managerial control?*

*Myself: x: Fictional use, hypothetical, emphatic*

*Their: x: Possessive personal pronoun, ownership of work, occupational.*

*Anybody: x: Meaning occupational group or larger organisational group?*

*Me: x: Himself.*

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**A2: Commentary**

'I' and 'I am' (I'm) precede Fergus's most personal statements, declarations and feelings. He is fearful of being forced to do something, in particular an activity that involves working closely with others.

*I'm just a bit nervous about pair programming*

'Others' also feature prominently in the text; 'everybody', 'people', 'their', 'anybody'. The message appears to be that they all have a part to play, something to say, or some say in what happens with the practice of 'pair programming'. Fergus concedes that these others 'have a say' in the work of programming, even though the work itself involves:

*"things like personalities, things like people's programming habits, and people being people..."*

Fergus reminds us that programming is often considered to be a solitary occupation but the changes implied by using the new methods imply a fundamental shift towards programming as a social and collaborative occupation!

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**Lunch break 1hr**

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**Data...**

...qualitative research has preferred, instead, to describe and illuminate the meaningful social world as prescribed by the interpretivist paradigm.  
*(Silverman, 1993)*

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**D: Collecting speech**



image: Seosamh Ó Dálaigh recording on the ediphone from Cáit and Máire Ruiséál, Dún Chaoin, County Kerry. Full-time folklore collectors like Seosamh Ó Dálaigh made repeated visits to exceptional informants in an effort to record as fully as possible their repertoire of tales and other folklore material. Photographer: Tomás Ó Muircheartaigh, c.1942.

Image courtesy of UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore and the National Folklore Collection.

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### P+T+D+M: Reflection

- What constitutes evidence?
- What do you think is the status of interview data?
- Are interviews and records authoritative, explicit and unambiguous?
- Are recordings accurate representations of what happened during an interview or discussion?
- What happens during transcription of recordings?
- What does the text stand for?

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### D: Guidelines on collecting speech

Get permission before taping

Be aware of the problems a recorder poses

- awkward, stilted, self conscious, unnatural, unspontaneous
- Don't rely on technology, bring two of everything and extra batteries

Don't rely on technology, make hand written notes in your journal

Observer's paradox

- does act of recording influence the observation?
- does the act of recording influence the phenomenon?

Preserve anonymity of informants, companies, products, events

Get permission before taping

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Jeffersonian Transcription Notation includes the following symbols:

Symbol	Name	Use
[ text ]	Brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
	Equal Sign	Indicates the break, and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.
(# of seconds)	Timed Pause	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
(.)	Micropause	A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.
[ ↓ ]	Period or Down Arrow	Indicates falling pitch or intonation.
[ ? or ↑ ]	Question Mark or Up Arrow	Indicates rising pitch or intonation.
ˊ	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
-	Hyphen	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
<text>	Greater than / Less than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Less than / Greater than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.
◊	Degree symbol	Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.
ALL CAPS	Capitalized text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
underline	Underlined text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
...	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of a sound.
(hhh)		Audible exhalation
• or (hhh)	High Dot	Audible inhalation
[ text ]	Parentheses	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
[ [ text ] ]	Double Parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.

Jeffersonian Transcription Notation is described in G. Jefferson, *Transcription Notation*, in J. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds), *Structures of Social Interaction*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

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**D: (very) simple transcription**

/ intonation boundary marker (that is, where the elements inside the slashes were given a particular intonation contour)  
(0.7) times in brackets are seconds, or fractions of a second  
(.) indicates a normal length of pause – that is, nothing unusual  
underlined words or parts of words show where particular syllables were stressed

(Carter et al, 2001: 243-309)

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**Coding...**

*Coding*: The analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

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**M+T: What is Grounded Theory?**

- “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 12)
- An approach “to generate and develop categories in order to produce delimited theories grounded in the data.” (Silverman, 1993:153)
- “It moves from one inductive inference to another by selectively collecting data, comparing and contrasting this material in the quest for patterns or regularities, seeking out more data to support or qualify these emerging clusters, and then gradually drawing inferences from the links between other new data segments and the cumulative set of conceptualizations.” (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 14)

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**M: A method for theory construction**

- Step 1. Underline key terms in the text
- Step 2. Restate key phrases
- Step 3. Reduce the phrases and create clusters
- Step 4. Reduction of clusters and attaching labels (pattern coding)
- Step 5. Generalizations about the phrases in each cluster (propositions)
- Step 6. Generating 'mini theories'; i.e. more conceptual explanation
- Step 7. Integrating theories in an explanatory framework. 'Central Theme'

(Miles & Huberman, 1994: 87-88)

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**A3: Text: 'I feel it myself'**

**Niall:** Can we just come back to the pair programming and the task board (?) What I think about the task board (.) and I feel it myself (.) is that the engineers have a hell of a lot more autonomy now (.) In what they do (.) there is much less control about what we do now (.) we pick things off the board (.) ourselves and we drive them ourselves right through to the end (.) There is an element of control and management in terms of what we actually do is gone now which may have existed in a more traditional model (.) And I think what unit testing and pair programming does (.) it's a different kind of control (.) It's a control over how we do what we do (.) that we do it right (.) because without that (.) you can have a lot of mavericks (.) Not on purpose (.) they're not out to break the system (.) Essentially that's why they're there (.)

See **TEXT: Group discussion line 352**

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**A3: Activity**

Individually, then discuss what you've done in pairs, then in fours draw conclusions.  
 Finally a full group discussion compares conclusions.

*For the text 'I feel it myself', highlight the personal pronouns used by Niall.*

- List the personal pronouns and comment on how they are used.
- Are occupational beliefs expressed by the speaker?
- Are occupational values evident in the text?

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**A3: Commentary**

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**10" break**

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**A4: Ciborra: Actors' commitments reflect different understandings**

- Review these categories on your own then complete activity 4.

The old commitments as dictated by systems development methodologies	The new commitments dictated by hospitality
Strong identity and advocacy	Define identity in a plastic way depending on the guest(s)
Enforce boundaries, standards, roles	Cross boundaries, test standards and roles
Be rational	Care
Seek consensus	Be the server
Be in control of the tool	Release control
Measure	Listen
Compare, learn and improve	Share
Be in control of unexpected consequences	Be open to mysteries and ambiguities (negative capability)

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**A4: Code the following statements as evidence of 'old' or 'new' commitments**

- "we deliver products in well known traditional time honoured processes"
- "it says so in the operating structures"
- "nothing gets done unless I sign off on it"
- "we need these formal sign-off meetings"
- "how do you know what you've got unless you can measure it"
- "the group decides for itself"
- "communicate through the interfaces"
- "throw it over the wall"
- "projects have their own logic"
- "people know what they're doing in the traditional approach"
- "we don't like uncertainty"
- "you've got to talk to the others before changing things"
- "it makes it personal, to take responsibility"
- "its all about give and take"
- "by getting close to the customer"
- "I wasn't empowered to question"
- "to challenge and engage in the decision making processes around what it is they end up doing"
- "their engineers or end-users sitting beside my engineers in my offices"
- "groups need to interoperate, communicate and interact at a certain pace"

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**A4: Commentary**

- A short focused discussion, coding 'old' or 'new commitments

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**D+A: Tools for analysis**

- ATLAS.ti
- NVIVO
- Word processor
  
- Search
- Highlight
- Mark
- Comment/code

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**A5: Group work: Microscopic examination of data part 1**

- Set up groups of 4-6 to work on microscopic examination of the data.
- The groups will report back to the whole class

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**A5: Microscopic examination of data**

Open coding

- Mark (underline, highlight)
- Label or name
- Memo (write brief thoughts or reflections)
- Conceptualise from labels etc.

Axial coding

- Concepts and categories
- Subcategories address questions like:
  - Who, what, why, when, how, how come, what consequences
- Write statements relating the category to the subcategory
- Axial categories/subcategories are mini-theories
- A category is considered saturated when no new information seems to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 136)

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**A6: Selective Coding & Theoretical Sampling**

Theoretical sampling

- A method of focusing future data gathering, driven by the concepts, categories grounded in earlier data
- An aide to both further building and 'testing' theory
- A method of creating comparissons

Selective Coding

- Narrowing into a central category, all other categories relate to it
- Explanation relating categories to the central is logical, consistent, unforced
- The central is sufficiently abstract as to suggest general theory
- The nascent theory has explanatory power
- It can explain positive and negative outcomes, affirmatory and contradictory phenomena (problem, issue, event, happening)

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**A6: Investigation anchored in Ciborra's 'Hospitality'**

**"hospital.ity**, n. Friendly & liberal reception of guests or strangers; *afford me the h. of your columns, put my letter in.* [f. OF *hospitalité* f. L *hospitalitatem* (as HOSPITAL, see -TY)]"



Image from <http://www.wordle.net/>

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**Group discussion**

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**P+T+D+M: Reflection**

- What is the object of study?
- How will I record or gather evidence of it?
- What are they saying?
- What am I hearing?
- What am I looking at?
- What's happening?
- What can I see?
- How do I 'see', 'hear', 'read', 'sense', 'feel', 'experience'.
- How do I interpret what I sense, experience, record?

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**Workshop reflection**

*"Analysis is the interplay between researchers and data."  
(Strauss & Corbin, 1998)*

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**Method/Analysis References**

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**End**

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