



Mobility in Collaboration

by Paul Luff & Christian Heath (1998)



Introduction

- The requirements to support mobility within collaboration activities
- Communication and collaboration in three very different settings
 - Primary health consultations
 - Construction sites
 - London underground
- The ways in which mobility is critical to collaborative work

Micro-mobility: Medical Consultations

- Mobility of a simple paper
 - Synchronous and Asynchronous collaboration
 - Doctors – other professionals
 - Patient – doctors
- Micro-mobility: “the way in which an artifact can be mobilized and manipulated for various purposes around a relatively circumscribed, or ‘at hand’, domain”



Remote and Local Mobility: London Underground

- The stations are dealing with over a hundred thousand passengers a day, and the staff have to deal with problems and emergencies when they arise
- The 'ops room' provides radio contact, connection to line control rooms and the police, possibility to open and close gates and so on
- Outside the 'ops rooms' you lose the access to important information.

Potential Technologies for Supporting Mobility on London Underground

- How new technologies can provide access to information and communication resources that are sensitive to both the location and circumstances of the users
- The system have to remain portable and become one of the tools the staff carries around
- A combination of fixed and mobile devices
- The mobile device would allow the supervisor to see status of alarms, communicate with staff in the station and elsewhere and also make public announcements

Summary

- Each of these studies discussed have focused on different aspects of mobility within collaborative work
 - Medical Consultation: how mobility of an artifact supports collaboration and co-present interaction
 - Construction site: how different ways mobility may be relevant for participants in a setting
 - London Underground: how access to information may be relevant to mobile staff
- Within interactions, the ways in which a user needs to be mobile have largely been ignored within CSCW
- We need to explore in more detail how objects are used in interaction and forms of work where the mobility of participants is critical to that work