

LITME@WORK - abstract

*Digitale en mediageletterdheid in werk op afstand en teamwork
Littérature numérique et médiatique dans les environnements de travail collaboratif et à distance*

Digital technology has become ubiquitous in the workplace, especially for office workers. New ways of working individually and collectively gradually emerge, supported by both technological and social evolutions. For example, workers have to deal with increasing quantities of information and need to develop strategies to avoid information overload, teleworking becomes more and more common over the years, coordination between several people through (synchronous and asynchronous) computer-mediated communication has become commonplace, and workers equipped with mobile technologies may be required to perform part of their professional activities in mobile contexts. All these situations raise questions regarding the evolution of the infrastructures provided by organisations, the changing ways through which work is achieved by individuals, the new set of competences that they need to have, and the now complex relationships between one's professional activity and private life. LITME@WORK will explore those questions in relation to office work practices, from clerical work to managerial tasks, focusing on ICT-supported teamwork and work at a distance.

Specifically, LITME@WORK will investigate the digital and media literacy (DML) competences called for by today's evolving, technology-supported environment of work. These interrelated informational, technical and social competences are indeed required for practicing teamwork and work at a distance, as visible in activities such as distance collaboration, different types of teamwork, personal and shared information management, re-creating and maintaining one's personal work environment throughout contexts of work, or managing a team at a distance. As main research questions, LITME@WORK will ask (1) how is DML addressed and practiced in today's office work and (2) how can DML be further integrated in emerging team/distance work structures and practices in order to support efficient, stimulating and meaningful ways of working. Starting from these questions, LITME@WORK will pursue four objectives: (i) understanding changing work environments and their DML requirements, (ii) developing a systemic approach to DML in team/distance office work, (iii) providing resources for societal and policy stakeholders, and (iv) contributing to research efforts in relevant fields of research (DML studies, science and technology studies (STS), sociology of innovation, sociology of ICT uses, human-computer interaction studies, organisation theory, research on job quality and learning at work).

Relying mainly on qualitative analyses, LITME@WORK will investigate DML from three different but complementary perspectives, each corresponding to one work package: the social configuration and appropriation of (DML) competence frames within and across organisations, the relationship between work organisation, workplace design and structural conditions for (DML) competence utilisation and learning, and the relationship between digital media uses and competences in employees' new work practices. Each approach will use its specific methods, related to its focus and theoretical framework, but the overall methodological structure will be the same across the work packages, the case studies will be tightly coordinated and the final results will be integrated.

The project intends to provide an up-to-date, encompassing knowledge of DML in teamwork and work at a distance, which will enhance stakeholders' understanding of DML and their capacity to take action. Specifically, LITME@WORK will deliver as main research results: a research framework for analysing the many aspects of DML in teamwork/distance work practices and environments, ranging from the broader context of organization structures to the point of view of individual workers themselves; an in-depth analysis of the ways in which organisations understand and negotiate the "(digitally) competent worker"; an up-to-date description of the changing office work competences, practices and structures, with a focus on teamwork and distance work trends; and a conceptual map and set of measurable indicators for DML competences aimed at serving as a resource for societal and policy stakeholders in terms of defining, evaluating, monitoring, recognising and supporting DML in office work.

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