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F A S S
FACULTY OF ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dr Monika Buscher

Senior Lecturer

Degree: PhD Sociology

Associated research centres and groups: [Centre for Mobilities Research \(CeMoRe\)](#), [Centre for Science Studies, ImaginationLancaster](#)



Research Interests

I study people's everyday material and epistemic practices - on the move or in situ - including experiences and practices of place-making and (distributed) collaboration. My approach is ethnographic and analytically rooted in ethnomethodology, science and technology studies and phenomenology. My work critically informs participatory, interdisciplinary socio-technical innovation. I actively co-design and facilitate the appropriation of cutting edge ubiquitous computing visions, technologies, platforms, and content in different settings (see, for example, [Workspace](#) and [PalCom](#)).

I am a Senior Research Lecturer in the mobilities.lab - an interdisciplinary collaboration between several different departments at Lancaster, and my research connects different fields of research: Mobilities Research, Design, Ethnomethodology, Science and Technology Studies, Participatory Design, Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), and Ubiquitous Computing.

Please contact me at m.buscher@lancaster.ac.uk

Selected Publications

Büscher M., Mogensen, P. (2007). [Designing for material practices of coordinating emergency teamwork](#). *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM)* May 13th-16th 2007 Delft, The Netherlands.

Büscher M., Kristensen, M. Mogensen, P. (2007). [Making the future palpable: Notes from a major incident Future Laboratory](#). *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM)* May 13th-16th 2007 Delft, The Netherlands.

Büscher M., Christensen M., Hansen K.M., Mogensen P., Shapiro D. (forthcoming) [Bottom-up, top-down? Connecting software architecture design with use](#) in Voß, A., Hartswood, M.; Ho, K., Procter, R.; Rouncefield, M.; Slack, R.; Büscher, M. *Configuring user-designer relations: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. Springer Verlag,

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Monika is Senior Lecturer in Sociology, and part of ImaginationLancaster through her role as director of the Mobilities.lab Lancaster. Since her PhD study of the practical and collaborative nature of imaginative practice, she has developed a programme of research on mobile work in creative and other professions, including healthcare, event management and emergency response. Her methodological innovations in video ethnography and ethnographically informed innovation have contributed to several research fields, including participatory design, computer supported cooperative work (CSCW), and palpable and pervasive computing.

CURRENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

palcom

PalCom: A new perspective for ambient computing

As computing technologies become an ever more 'invisible' and powerful part of our lives, it is crucial that people are supported in understanding what these technologies are doing and what they could do for them. The European research project PalCom supports people in making computing palpable, that is, 'noticeable' and 'understandable'.



IMDE: Research Cluster on Innovative Media for a Digital Economy

In this research cluster, we investigate digital economy practices that are emerging around the capabilities of social, mobile and pervasive technologies. We explore how we can develop new services, new forms of exchange and interaction that benefit the whole of the UK economy.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

SHOW ALL

Büscher, Monika; Kristensen, Margit and Preben, Mogensen (2008) **'When and how (not) to trust IT? Supporting virtual emergency teamwork'** in Fiedrich, Frank and Bartel Van de Walle (eds) *Proceedings of the 5th International ISCRAM Conference – Washington, DC, USA, May 2008*.

Büscher M., Kristensen, M. Mogensen, P. (2008) **Making the future palpable: Notes from a major incident Future Laboratory**. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM)* May 13th-16th 2007 Delft, The Netherlands.

Making the future palpable: Notes from a major incident Future Laboratory

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Abstract: In this paper we describe experiences from a Future Laboratory. Future laboratories allow users to experiment with prototypes of future technologies in as realistic as possible conditions. We have devised this method because, to realize the potential of advanced ubiquitous computing technologies it is essential to anticipate and design for future practices, but for prospective users it is often difficult to imagine and articulate future practices and provide design specifications. However, they readily invent new ways of working in engagement with new technologies and, by facilitating realistic use of prototype technologies in Future Laboratories, designers and users can define and study both opportunities and constraints for design. We present 11 scenes from a Major Incidents Future Laboratory held in September 2005. Many raise tough questions rather than provide quick answers. In addition, many also bring desirable and realizable socio-technical futures into relief, illustrating the value of the Future Laboratory approach.

Keywords: Ubiquitous computing, future practice, major incident.

When and how (not) to trust IT? Supporting virtual emergency teamwork

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we use the formative evaluation of a prototype ‘assembly’ of pervasive computing technologies to specify design implications for emergency virtual teamwork tools. The prototype assembly, called “*Overview*”, was implemented in collaboration with police, fire and medical emergency services as part of the real life event management during the Tall Ships’ Races 2007 in Denmark. We describe how the emergency teams used the technologies for collaboration between distributed colleagues, to produce shared situation awareness, to manage efforts and resources and respond to minor emergencies. Trust in technology is a key need virtual teams identify in their endeavours to dovetail innovative technologies into emergency work. We show how practices of working up trust are supported by the PalCom open architecture (which was used to build *Overview*), and delineate design guidelines to enable the productive integration of pervasive computing.

Keywords

Virtual teams, trust in technology, palpable computing, participatory design.

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Vision in motion

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Abstract. Mobility and materiality are pervasive and revealing features of professional vision. In this paper I examine how landscape architects assess visual and landscape effects of proposed urban or rural developments. A focus on mobility and materiality reveals a struggle for objectivity and transparency, and the lived reality of Latour’s observation that “we have never been modern”. But it also highlights the emergence of new forms of perception and epistemic practice. Based on work with landscape architects and computer scientists in participatory technology research and design projects, I present an analysis of current practices and some observations on emerging future practices of appreciating and shaping places.

Introduction

Lynda, a landscape architect, is driving through Scottish hills and glens, carrying out a landscape and visual assessment. These assessments are required for all major development applications, ranging from housing to electricity power lines (ODPM, 1999), to characterise the existing landscape or cityscape and evaluate how it would be affected by development—visually and in terms of its ‘sense of place’. Lynda is taking part in an ethnographic study and describes some of the criteria that guide her judgment: “Someone decided that forestry would be allowed to change that landscape. Now, because the forestry is there, it has less sensitivity and more capacity.” A blanket of monoculture spruce is evidence of human intervention that has changed the character of the landscape (figure 1),⁽¹⁾ and could pave the way for further change.



Figure 1. The landscape Lynda is referring to (photography by Envision, <http://www.envision3d.co.uk>).

‘Landscape character’, ‘sensitivity’, and ‘capacity’ are professional terms meant to make assessment as objective and transparent as possible (CA and SNH, 2002; 2004; LI and IEMA, 2002). They are discussed in more detail below. At this point, it is important to note that they attract much debate within the professional and geographic communities involved in urban or rural change, marking landscape and visual assess-