“This is really interesting. I never even thought about this.”
Methodological strategies for studying invisible information work

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Work ...

• “the ongoing concerting and coordinating of individuals’ activities” (Smith, 1999, p. 7)

• Many lines of work:
  – information work (Corbin & Strauss, 1985)
  – adherence work (Senteio & Veinot, 2014)
  – knowledge work (Newell, 2015)
  – document work (Trace, 2007)
  – literacy work and caring work (Stooke & McKenzie, 2009).
  – articulation work (Star, 1991)
4 methodological reflections on studying the invisible
1. Consider the local and the translocal
2. Attend to the material and the textual
3. Consider visual methods
4. Reconsider the participant’s role and expertise
4 categories of invisible work

1. work done in invisible places
2. work defined as routine or manual
3. work done by invisible people
4. informal work processes that are not part of any job description but which are crucial to the functioning of the workplace

Nardi & Engeström, 1999
Questions?

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