



# School of Health Information Science

## Seminar:

# An Ethnomethodological approach to Assistive Technology implementation with older adults: the intractability of context in use



Speaker:

## Dr. Simon Carroll

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**April 17 on Zoom**

**12:00PM PT**

This talk will introduce an Ethnomethodological research tradition that has been a major contributor to the interdisciplinary field of Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI). CSCW has focused on how computer-based technology interacts with humans in group or cooperative work settings, with the latter being defined very broadly to include most forms of human-computer interaction. In particular, it has been especially attentive to understanding the human context within which computer use takes place, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives in the social sciences.

Starting with Lucy Suchman's seminal book, *Plans and Situated Actions*, and moving to Crabtree, Rouncefield & Tolmie's *Doing Design Ethnography*, the presentation develops the argument for the salience and unique contribution of this tradition (sometimes referred to as the 'Lancaster School') to understanding the complexities of designing, implementing and sustaining the effective use of technologies in interactive settings.

The talk will then move to consider some relevant examples specific to the challenges of implementing assistive technologies for older adults in their community dwellings/residences, taken from a four-year Michael Smith Health Research BC-funded study called KISS-AT (Knowledge for the Scale-up, Spread and Sustainability of Assistive Technology). One major aspect to the study was a participatory implementation of a locked tablet communication device and software application called CanConnect, with older adults in the remote community of Port Hardy, BC. We recorded installations of the device, and the initial orientation and training provided by research assistants to the older adults themselves and family members. These recordings made certain aspects of the in situ context of the residential life of the older adults available for ethnomethodological analysis, and were perspicacious for exhibiting features of AT implementation that are often ignored, or abstracted from in traditional approaches to evaluating ATs.

\*Video link to a short film about the Staying Apart Together project, a MSHRBC REACH grant that looked at the experience of CanConnect in Port Hardy. [https://youtu.be/IMAf1DUHldc?si=sa2WH6AMpO\\_\\_6KTf](https://youtu.be/IMAf1DUHldc?si=sa2WH6AMpO__6KTf)

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