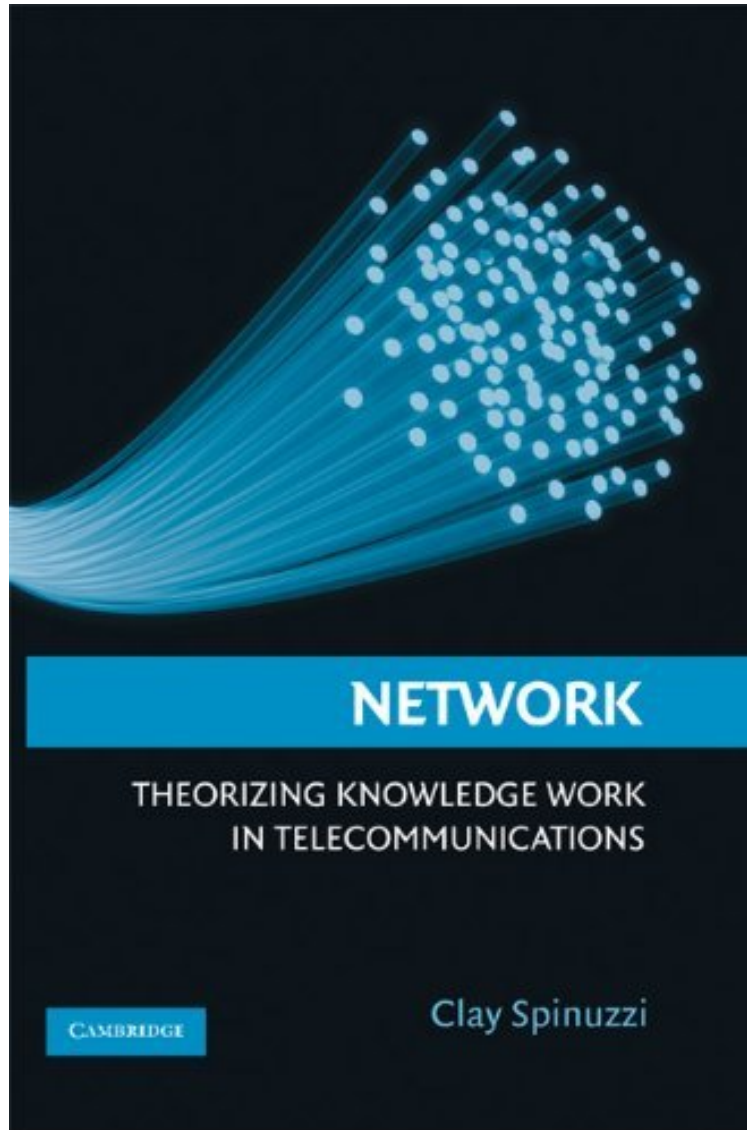


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Network: Theorizing Knowledge Work in Telecommunications

Clay Spinuzzi

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Clay Spinuzzi : Network: Theorizing Knowledge Work in Telecommunications before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Network: Theorizing Knowledge Work in Telecommunications:

How does a telecommunications company function when its right hand often doesn't know what its left hand is doing? How do rapidly expanding, interdisciplinary organizations hold together and perform their knowledge work? In this book, Clay Spinuzzi draws on two warring theories of work activity ndash; activity theory and actor-network theory

ndash; to examine the networks of activity that make a telecommunications company work and thrive. In doing so, Spinuzzi calls a truce between the two theories, bringing them to the negotiating table to parley about work. Specifically, about net work: the coordinative work that connects, coordinates, and stabilizes polycontextual work activities. To develop this uneasy dialogue, Spinuzzi examines the texts, trades, and technologies at play at Telecorp, both historically and empirically. Drawing on both theories, Spinuzzi provides new insights into how net work actually works and how our theories and research methods can be extended to better understand it.

"And you thought theory was boring. Read this book to change your mind. Spinuzzi's snazzy prose is part hardcore social theory, part corporate soap opera. He takes theoretical discussion of actor-network theory and activity theory in new directions, bringing them together in a productive tension to illuminate critical issues in human-computer interaction, computer-supported collaborative work, and organizational design. The empirical substrate for the theoretical work is a tour de force ethnography of a large telecommunications company. Spinuzzi talks and listens to the little people, he delves fearlessly into the complexities (and muddles) of the big theories, and is kind and generous to all. A must read." -Bonnie Nardi, School of Information and Computer Sciences, University of California, Irvine

"In this marvelously readable and yet theoretically challenging case study of work in a telecommunications company, Spinuzzi rethinks the (post)modern workplace-distributed, networked, spliced, improvised. He puts two of the leading explanations of such workplaces-actor-network theory and activity theory-into dialog as he follows workers and managers doing what he terms 'net work.' Through his fine-grained and always fascinating stories of their daily attempts to make sense and make do, he shows a way beyond earlier theories to a new understanding of (post)modern work and workplace learning. This is one of those rare books that is both a must-read for researchers and a good read for anyone looking for insight into how work actually gets done today." -David R. Russell, Professor, Rhetoric and Professional Communication, Iowa State University

"Network is a well written, very useful organizational ethnography, raising a series of significant issues about how to conceptualize organizations." Canadian Journal of Sociology, Alex Preda, University of Edinburgh

About the Author Clay Spinuzzi is an Associate Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Texas, Austin, where he directs the Computer Writing and Research Lab. Spinuzzi's interests include research methods and methodology, workplace research, and computer-mediated activity. Spinuzzi has received several awards for his scholarship, including the National Council of Teachers of English Best Book in Technical or Scientific Communication (2004).