I’m online with a zillion options: Work-learning in those “other” spaces

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Note: this is a pared down version of my presentation
We routinely live at different scales, in different contexts, and at different settings—Default, Phone-only, Avatar On, Everything Off—on a number of screens, each with its own size, interface, and resolution, and across several time zones.

We change pace often, make contact with diverse groups and individuals, sometimes for hours, other times for minutes, using means of communication ranging from the most encrypted and syncopated to the most discursive and old-fashioned, such as talking face-to-face.

We isolate ourselves in the middle of crowds within individual bubbles of technology, or sit alone at our computers to tune into communities of like-minded souls or to access information about esoteric topics. (Antonelli 2008)
Curiosities

• wider networks of knowledge generation – multiple and mobile
• professional work-related learning practices increasingly permeated with the web
• blending and fragmentation of knowledge building
• profusion and abundance
overload and speed up push to “keep up” \( \rightarrow \) am I as connected as I should be?

the paradox of increasing accessibility of information but not enough and wanting more
digitization camouflaged
digital fluencies
How are knowledge building practices changing as web and mobile technologies are increasingly permeating learning-work spaces?
self-constructed distributed learning spaces that integrate:

- technologies
- resources/artefacts
- activities
- people

Learning Ecology
Today

- present research on the experiences of workers
- explore the notion of “learning ecologies”
- delve into digital fluencies
- examine the implications of increasingly complex human-technology entanglements
Things do not play a role in an educational setting by acting apart from us ... rather they interact with us as surprising cocreators of educational environments (Waltz, 2004).
learning as an effect of a network ... networks which include people, objects, ideas, practices

the principle of symmetry

Actor Network Theory (ANT)
different technologies
individual & collective interactions
formal & informal learning activities
close and distant connections
F2F & online spaces

learning ecologies: spaces which generate and mobilize knowledge
What I want to do in my PLE

- Organise my stuff on the Web
- Write collaboratively
- Draw diagrams
- Send large files
- Cite & store my references
- Receive interesting stuff to read/listen to
- RSS feeds (e.g. Google Reader, podcast feeds)
- Lose myself in a fantasy world - just for fun
- Share multimedia content
- Network with other people around topics that interest me
- Schedule events, remember stuff
- E.g. Wordpress blog (for long thoughts)
  or twitter (for short sharp bytes)
- E.g. Google/Outlook Calendar,
  Evernote, iGoogle "To-Do" widget,
  Clipperz (for passwords)

E.g. Etherpad, Google Docs for synchronous collaboration;
wikis like WetPaint, Google Sites for asynchronous collaboration

E.g. iGoogle, NetVibes
E.g. Google, Wikipedia, SlideShare, OER Commons

Search for answers
Bookmark, annotate & share web pages
Talk to people in other locations
NOW - and look at stuff together
Share what I'm learning/thinking with everyone

E.g. Zotero, RefWorks
E.g. Second Life

E.g. Second Life
E.g. Filemail.com
E.g. Gliffy.com

E.g. Flickr (photos)
Slideshare (presentations)
YouTube (videos), OER Commons

edtechpost.wikispaces.com
- things that helped them with day-to-day work activities
- more about particular work practices as well as the viability of certain work
- how to draw on and participate in fluid and mobile knowledges
- skills related to learning in these online spaces (Thompson, 2010)
Evolving your Learning Ecology

what do you want to do? what conversations do you want to participate in?

consider the learning mix

the technologies
What do you want to do?

• online collaborative writing and resource development
• talk to people in real time and look at information and ideas together
• network with other people interested in similar topics
• share thinking with others
• share digital artefacts
• tap into learning resources online
• customize what information you want to receive
• bookmark, annotate and share web pages
• learn “anywhere” by relying on mobile devices
<table>
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<td>Learning events</td>
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Some technology options

collaborate using GoogleDocs, wikis
work with people in real time vis WebEx, Skype, Elluminate
m-learning via PDA's, mobile phones, MP3 players, wearable technology
cloud computing
share multimedia content in Flickr, Slideshare, YouTube
network with other people in online communities (i.e., Yahoo groups, professional ListServs), Facebook, SecondLife

annotate and share web pages in del.icio.us
customize information received using RSS feeds

do, make, or revise digital artefacts and learning objects by going to MERLOT or Galileo and/or pod/vodcasting

share thinking with others by blogging or tweeting
work with the ubiquity of learning in the everyday

identify digital fluencies

respect the diversity enabled by the web

ensure sustainable and mindful learning practices
from consumers to producers of information and knowledge
The tools are important but it is the connected networks of people, data and services that are emerging around them that are what this is really all about (Bryant, 2007).
epistemic objects: open, question-generating, complex … processes and projections rather than definitive things … unfold indefinitely (Knorr Cetina, 2001)
may generate explorative and expansive forms of engagement ... and link everyday work with wider circuits of knowledge and practice development (Nerland & Jensen, 2010)
join cyberspace as generators of ideas, rather than mere recipients ... otherwise, the internet will become a form of dependence, some sort of cultural imperialism and cyber neo-colonialism (Poliknov & Abramova, 2003)
digital fluencies

digitally *adaptive skills* in order to participate fully in the global digital society, protect and advance interests as digital citizens, and to benefit from the digital economy (Media Awareness Network, 2010)
digital fluencies

- privacy
- blurring of professional & personal spaces
- online identity
- managing one’s digital footprint
- data security & ownership
- surveillance & sophisticated analytics
- intellectual property protection
- commercialization (Thompson, 2011a)
the delete button: mediating relations with what presses in on screens as well as digital traces left behind in cyberspace (Thompson, 2012)
Follow up Publications


• Thompson, T. L. (2011). (Re/Dis)assembling learning practices online with fluid objects and spaces. Studies in Continuing Education. Advance online publication.


• Thompson, T. L. (2010). Self-employed and online: (Re)negotiating work-learning practices. Journal of Workplace Learning, 22(6), 360-375.
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