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ECSCW 2022 Masterclass ‘Doing CSCW research with small and medium enterprises.’

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Abstract. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are often described as “the backbone of the European economy” (Annual report on European SMEs 2014/2015), counting about 22 million active SMEs in 2014 and employing almost 90 million people (ibidem). You can find various branches and fields, including diverse examples such as IT start-ups, shops, metalworking, and the ancillary industry. Many successful, long-standing SMEs have already experienced multiple socio-economic changes and phases of transformation like the “third industrial revolution” with the integration of automatisisation and information and communication technologies (ICT). Many companies have faced the so-called “industry 4.0” development and the correlated digitalisation processes within the last decade. Since the start of the ongoing Covid19 pandemic in early 2020, some of these processes were accelerated (home office, coving phases of quarantine, shift to e-commerce etc.), and some additional aspects like delivery problems, loss of orders, sales collabs, absence of personnel) are an enduring challenge for many SMEs. These issues are interesting from a CSCW perspective: How do the involved actors in the companies deal with such challenges and processes of digitalisation and technological transformation? How do the different stakeholders cooperate on an intra-, inter-, and external level (meaning within the respective SME, with their collaborative partners and providers of infrastructure etc.), especially in times of crisis? In the masterclass, you will zoom into SMEs, learn about crucial concepts connected with the outlined issues above, discuss methodological

approaches, and engage stakeholders for cooperation when conducting research and design projects in this practical field.

Format and schedule

The masterclass is planned as an on-site event at the University of Coimbra, San Francisco Convent, Coimbra, Portugal, on **Tuesday, 28th June 2022**, from **14:00-17:00 UTC+1**.

Outline:

1. Welcome & introduction
2. Some 'facts': definitions of SMEs, examples etc.
3. Continuity in long-standing SMEs: a tale of changes and transformation
 - Down on memory lane: the four stages of the 'industrial revolution'
 - 'Industry 4.0' and digital transformation processes
4. Crisis management for SMEs
 - Vulnerability and resilience: experiences from the Covid19 pandemic
 - Business continuity management (BCM)
5. CSCW research projects and collaborations with SMEs
 - Some methodological challenges...
 - ... and how to cope with them
6. Wrap up

Target group

Students of CSCW or HCI on Masters or PhD level who are interested in the topic and - ideally – have some project experience with SMEs (but that's not a requirement). You are welcome on any level: novice and with basic knowledge.

First recommended reading:

Syed, H. A., Schorch, M., Ankenbauer, S. A., Hassan, S. S., Meisner, K., Stein, M., Skudelny, S., Karasti, H. and Pipek, V. (2021): 'Infrastructuring for organizational resilience: Experiences and perspectives for business continuity', *Proceedings of the 19th European Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (ECSCW 2021) – Workshops, EUSSET* (ISSN 2510-2591), doi:10.18420/ecscw2021-wsmc02

Syed, H. and Schorch, M. (eds.) (2021): 'Infrastructuring for organizational resilience: A workshop report', *International Reports on Socio-Informatics (IRSI)* 18 (1). Download: <https://www.iisi.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/IRSIV18I1.pdf>

Organiser's short bio

Marén Schorch is a PostDoc researcher with a PhD in Sociology and specializing in qualitative social methods, preferring ethnographic approaches. She was the leader of the interdisciplinary junior research group “KontiKat” at the University of Siegen, Germany (2017-2021). Using her long-term experience in multidisciplinary research projects and settings in CSCW, she has been involved in multiple participatory design projects at the University of Siegen and international partners since 2013. Her PostDoc research focuses on the interplay of continuity and (digital, social, economic) change in the context of crisis, the construction of “safety”, and its impact on cooperation and collaboration in small and medium-sized companies and society. More particularly, she has conducted multiple empirical studies dealing with risk awareness, crisis experience, and practices of (emergency) preparedness as part of the resilience of people and organisations. She has published many articles on her varied research and co-organized several CSCW-related workshops such as ECSCW 2011, 2020, 2021; CSCW 2014 and CSCW 2017; COOP 2016, and GROUP 2016. She has been AC for CSCW 2021, CHI 2018, and 2020, chair for the track “Exploratory papers” at ECSCW 2019 (with Ingrid M. Erickson), and regularly reviews for ECSCW, CSCW, GROUP, CHI, etc.

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