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Technology's Affect on Thought and Culture at UNAC, or: How I Learned to Stop Thinking and Love the Job

Abstract

Due to various structural features of the United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC), the culture of the organization is one where defined pod-like subcultures exist along the lines of “projects” but where outside of these subcultures social interaction with others in the organization is largely pragmatic and impersonal. Communication technology facilitates this situation where subcultures exist to the exclusion of others because it allows work to be done from virtually anywhere at anytime, meaning Co-Project Officers can together set their own unique work schedules. Typical 9-5 in-office hours are not typically adopted; rather most choose to stagger their work and leisure time more equally throughout the day, also utilizing the option to perform work outside the office. This creates a situation where interaction with others in the office is minimal and due to the convenience of interoffice email, even when there is communication it is often over the internet as opposed to in person. As a consequence of the convenience and reliance upon e-mail employees become bound to their computers, spending hours a day calculatively reading and responding to unimportant messages.

With reference to Martin Heidegger's “Memorial Address”, Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Harrison M. Trice's *Occupational Subcultures in the Workplace*, and Anne Wilson Scaef's *The Addictive Organization*, I will look at how communication technology, primarily email, has affected both culture and thought at UNAC and how calculative tasks can be seen to have addictive properties.