Edited by Nathalie Mitev · Jeremy Aroles
Kathleen A. Stephenson · Julien Malaurent

New Ways of Working

Organizations and
Organizing in
the Digital Age

Technology, Work and Globalization

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in the Digital Age

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Foreword

A foreword is meant to be a section of introductory remarks that is written by someone who is not an author of the text itself. It is placed at the very front of the book by way of context, often analyzing the major streams of thought in which the book's project might be emplaced. This Foreword will concentrate upon providing some sense of location in space, and in time, for the many diverse ideas to follow. The contextualization we offer for New Ways of Working (NWW) is partly geographical and partly historical.

Much of what passes today for 'new' working practices has its origins in history, some of it many centuries old. It is simply that analysts have forgotten to look backward as well as forward. Conventional approaches that are 'run of the mill' (the unexamined output from early factories that was standardized and unexceptional in any way) to the central topic of organizations and organizing in the Digital Age assume that humanity is now, everywhere, facing something so new as to mark it off from all that has gone before. It is a form of assumed rupturism where the break with the past is clear, dramatic, and slightly painful. It is as if the mill went overnight from being water powered to steam powered with major consequences that were there for all to see and the event did not require questioning or examination. Of course, the 'Digital Age' (marked by initial capitals) does represent something new and transformative wherein

information gathering becomes very extensive and work is increasingly expressed as high-speed procedures permitted by the use of microprocessor-based technology. Yet, the same attributes of work speed-up and a wider reach for gathering relevant corporate information have been associated much earlier with those previous revolutionary technologies of the telegraph and the telephone. These tele-technologies were claimed to have annihilated space in the same ways as the digital age was meant to usher in an era where the tyranny of distance was about to be overcome. One has to be circumspect about the assumption of, indeed desire for, organizational novelty. Indeed, it behooves us to turn to some lessons of history about how we should address strident claims for total newness. We need to constantly question just how 'new' some developments were, are, and will be.

Geographically, the role of the state is contingent. Encouragement of NWW might occur primarily via the state apparatus and a national emphasis, perhaps, upon the need for the state to modernize its surveillance technologies, its capacity to supply and analyze data, and its provision of a command structure for its internal security forces. Here 'organizing' is within a 'regime of regulation' which drives particular New Ways of Working in which centralized control figures large. In the neo-liberal states of the world, NWW may well be encouraged more by market forces and the desire of organizations to be competitive in the face of new market entrants. This would represent a position wherein NWW would be linked much more closely to a 'regime of accumulation'. And if nation states cling to particular regimes of regulation and accumulation, it should not surprise us if there are differences: different 'business recipes', different industrial strategies, and different models of how the state and the economy interact. Given this disparate context, we might well expect different types of new working practices within different forms of teleworking, in open offices, in the gig economy, and within various types of crowdsourcing and co-working. For many organizations, the architecture of NWW is by no means fixed.

As this foreword loses its position at the beginning of the book, and other chapters move into the readers' eyeline, we are made all too aware of the spatio-temporal nature of all text. Writing, it has been said, is 'a

machine for the suppression of time'. It passes knowledge down through the generations like the Dead Sea scrolls, allowing the reader to witness extraordinary interpretations of past events and emotions as if they happened today. But what this aphorism fails to grasp is that all writing is of and in its time. It cannot be anything else but contingent. Specific history and specific geography grasp us tightly. But within their grip, it is possible for committed writers to explore a little, to find the wriggle room necessary to learn about the past, the present, and the future and to ably communicate their research with us, the readers of this present volume.

Manchester, UK   Gibson Burrell
Lancaster, UK   Karen Dale

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Notes on Contributors

Michel Ajzen PhD in Management, is Teaching and Research Assistant in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations at the School of Work and Employment Sciences at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium. He is invited lecturer at the Université Catholique de l'Ouest, France. His research focuses on New Ways of Working and managing, from a critical and interdisciplinary perspective. More precisely, he questions how the so-called new world of work as a set of practices (e.g. telework, flexwork, distributed workplaces, flexdesk, and flexitime) and discourses (e.g. freedom, empowerment, and entrepreneurship) produce and/or reflect a new social order within which power issues take place to define the 'newness'. He is also the Managing Editor of the *International Journal of Work Innovation*.

Marie Antoine holds a PhD in Business Management and Economics from the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium. Her research concentrates on New Ways of Working, organizational transformation, and human resource management. For her thesis, she studied the transition of an organization toward a 'new world/ways of work' environment and questioned how this led to a reconstruction of the organization's identity. Her research has largely been influenced by the thought of critical management studies. She is a guest professor at the Louvain School of Management, Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences and

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Jeremy Aroles   is Assistant Professor in Organization Studies at Durham University, UK. Prior to joining Durham, he worked as a lecturer in management and organization studies at The University of Manchester where he obtained his PhD in Organization Studies. His research gravitates around three different topics: the emergence of New Ways of Working (the future of work, digital nomadism, the disruptive potential of new working practices, the evolving relationship between 'formal' organizations and individuals in an increasingly digitized society, etc.), the management of culture, and the relation between fiction and organizational worlds. Conceptually, his work draws from the material semiotics of actor-network theory, the work of Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and various phenomenologists. His latest research has explored the rise of digital nomadism and the organization of makerspaces.

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Gibson Burrell is Professor of Organization Theory at the Universities of Manchester and Leicester, UK, each on a fractional basis. Over the last 45 years he has been employed by the Universities of Lancaster, Warwick, and Leicester wherein he undertook a number of departmental and university roles. He was a founding editor of the journal *Organization* and is a section editor for the *Journal of Business Ethics*. He became a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in 2015 and obtained a research fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust 2014–2016. In 2014 he was awarded a 'trailblazer' prize from the American Academy of Management Organization Theory division for his contribution to the field. He has been responsible for a number of books and edited books as well as several articles in journals that are still cited.

Karen Dale is Professor of Organization Theory in the Department of Organization, Work and Technology at Lancaster University, UK, having previously worked at the Universities of Leicester, Essex, and Warwick and in the National Health Service and local government. She has published in the areas of gender and equality; on embodiment and organization; and on spatiality, materiality, and organization, including the books *Anatomising Embodiment and Organisation Theory* (2001) and *The Spaces of Organisation and the Organisation of Space* (2007) (with G. Burrell). Most recently she has edited books on Henri Lefebvre, with S. Kingma and V. Wasserman, and on New Ways of Working, with J. Aroles and F-X. De Vaujany. She has also produced expert reports for the European

Union Agency for Occupational Safety and Health on the use of enhancement drugs in the contemporary workplace.

Aurore Dandoy completed her PhD in Management Science at the PSL-Université Paris Dauphine under the direction of Professor de Vaujany. Her thesis was entitled 'Legitimization Practices and the Emergence of a Field: Ten Years of Parisian Coworking'. For four years, she studied coworking spaces and practices as a community manager in two coworking spaces where she observed and analyzed community management practices. She also worked as community manager in an international think tank (Research Group on Collaborative Spaces) for which she coordinated several international and local workshops. Prior to her PhD, she worked for eight years in human resources management as a project manager for a blended learning company and for a pharmaceutical company, as a consultant for IT projects in different companies, and as a regional manager in the automobile sector.

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Anthony Hussenot is Professor in Organization Studies at the Université Côte d'Azur in France. He has researched the current evolutions of work, notably by studying how and why New Ways of Working emerge and how these new practices challenge the way we collaborate and organize. He focuses on theorizing the organizational dynamics emerging from these New Ways of Working. With others, he has developed the events-based approach as a way to understand organizational dynamics in a constantly evolving society. He has conducted studies in several sectors such as the maker movement, private banking, and education. He has published in academic journals such as *Organization Studies*, *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, and *M@n@gement*. He has recently published a book about the maker movement in which he describes the events-based approach, *L'organisation à l'épreuve des makers. Propositions pour une approche par les événements* (2019), with Presses de l'Université Laval, Canada.

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Nathalie Mitev was Associate Professor in the Department of Management, Information Systems and Innovation Group, The London School of Economics, and has held positions in several UK universities for 30 years. Her research focuses on the organizational aspects of information systems and how technology is used and implemented, drawing on science and technology studies. She has an international reputation for in-depth qualitative research, setting a critical agenda, and helping to bring this approach within mainstream information systems management research. She has applied actor-network theory and the sociology of translation to analyzing information systems failures. She has published critical work in management studies journals such *Personnel Review*, *Management Learning*, *Journal of Management Studies*, and *Culture and Organization*. She has also published in *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Journal of Information Technology*, *Information Technology & People*, *The Information Society*, *Information Technology for Development*, and *New Work, Technology and Employment*. She was track chair for the International Conference on Information Systems and co-chair for the IFIP Working Group 8.2 and is Associate Editor for the journal *Information Technology & People*. She is co-editor of *Materiality and Space: Organizations, Artefacts and Practices* (2013); *Materiality and Time: Historical Perspectives on Organizations, Artefacts and Practices* (2014); *Materiality, Rules and Regulation in Management and Organization Studies* (2015); and *Materiality and Managerial Techniques* (2018), all published by Palgrave Macmillan. She is a research associate at Paris Dauphine University, France, and Muenster University, Germany, and runs doctoral workshops on qualitative research methods, epistemology, and writing the thesis. She is also an academic coordinator for the digital Executive Doctorate in Business Administration at the Business Science Institute, Luxembourg.

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Introduction: New Ways of Working, Organizations and Organizing in the Digital Age

**Nathalie Mitev, Jeremy Aroles,
Kathleen A. Stephenson, and Julien Malaurent**

Focus of This Edited Volume

This edited book revolves around the ways in which organizations and work itself have changed in the light of the digital age, with a particular focus on the role of materiality, body and technologies in these new organizational landscapes. This book therefore combines recent scholarly

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