

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

# ACTIVITY 2008

12–14 May 2008, Helsinki, Finland

## Activity Analyses for Developing Work

Second Symposium of the Technical Committee 'Activity Theories for Work Analysis and Design' (ATWAD) of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA)

[www.ttl.fi/activity2008](http://www.ttl.fi/activity2008)

**Call for Abstracts**



## Welcome to Activity2008



The idea for Activity2008 Symposium was born at the 16th World Congress on Ergonomics at Maastricht, July 2006, in connection with the first symposium of the International Ergonomics Association's Technical Committee 'Activity Theory for Work Analysis and Design'. The symposium was highly successful, and a decision was made to hold a meeting in Finland prior to the next IEA World Congress in China in 2009.

The organizers wish the participants cordially welcome to the Symposium!

### Topic

How do ergonomic research and practice respond to the increasing complexity of new production and service concepts? Activity theoretical and other system-oriented approaches open a more comprehensive understanding of the ongoing changes in work and serve to facilitate the design and development of work.

The development of information technology and changes in production and service structures are motivated both by competitive reasons and by improvements in human capabilities and work contents. Hence, we may observe contradictory phenomena in today's work as well as an increase in certain types of health and safety problems. Although ergonomists and human factors specialists strive to improve work and work-related well-being through, for instance, versatile analytical and participatory methods, it seems clear that the complexity and dynamics of recent workplace transformations require new methodologies and their combinations.

In addition to methodological discussions, the symposium offers a forum for exchanging knowledge and ideas about the changes at work and service and production concepts.

### The Symposium 'Activity Analyses for Developing Work' will comprise of following main themes

#### 1. Interventions in developing work, and their methodologies

The current changes in work challenge us to re-examine what we mean by development, and call for rigorous interventionist research methodologies. We seek answers to questions such as, How to design interventions aiming towards sustainable work systems and a positive change in work? How do we deal with issues such as learning, participation, and power in ergonomic interventions? How do activity approaches contribute to the change/intervention process?

## 2. The concepts 'work' and 'activity' in ergonomic research

- 'Work' and 'activity' are broad general categories. For some of us, work equals micro-level operations, whereas for others work tasks involve entire organizations. In these circumstances, what should be the focus of ergonomic research, and under which premises? How do 'work' and 'activity' relate to 'environments'?

## 3. Activity approaches in risk analysis and management

Risk analysis provides a holistic viewpoint to the safety of work systems. Recently, it has gained new importance due to the globalization of work and continuous changes in different parts of the system. Risk management processes are connected to how individuals and organizations foresee and manage changes in their operations. How can activity and system theoretical methods contribute to the development of risk management practices? Are activity and system theoretical methods able to uncover new risks?

## 4. New activity-driven design concepts

Ergonomics is a science of design that focuses on the human-technology system. Designing systems is not adapting technology to observed activities, but creating new space for the development of future activity. An ergonomic contribution to design processes has to be based both on activity analysis and on the anticipation of future activity. How can activity theoretical and other systemic approaches help us formulate new design concepts that account for the actual technological and organizational changes?

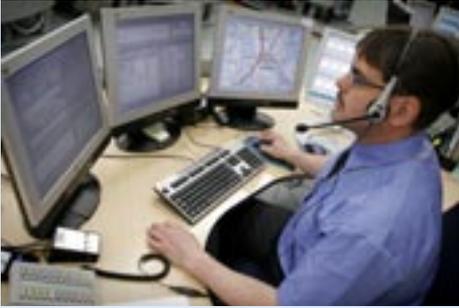
## Target group

The Symposium aims at lively discussions between ergonomists and activity theorists in a creative atmosphere. We invite researchers, developers, and practitioners to present studies from a wide variety of work domains emphasizing, but not limited to, design and risks at work.

## Date and venue

The Symposium takes place on 12–14 May 2008 in Helsinki at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The venue is close to the city centre of Helsinki. For more information about the venue, see <http://www.ttl.fi/internet/english>.

Monday, 12 May	10.00–12.00	Registration and coffee
Monday, 12 May	12.00–18.00 19.30	Official opening and symposium programme Reception at Helsinki City
Tuesday, 13 May	08.30–17.00 19.00	Symposium programme Dinner at Suomenlinna
Wednesday, 14 May	09.00–15.00 15.00–15.30	Symposium programme and closing ceremony Coffee



## Keynote speakers

### **Changing work through IT design: reflections upon participatory design**

Professor Susanne Bødker, University of Aarhus, Denmark

In Scandinavia, research projects on user participation in systems development date back to the 1970s. The projects emphasized active co-operation between researchers and workers in the organization in question to help improve their work situation. In the Utopia project, the major achievements were experience-based design methods developed through the focus on hands-on experiences, emphasizing the need for technical and organizational alternatives. In recent years, it has been a major challenge for PD to embrace the fact that technology is no longer used as isolated systems in well-defined communities of work. At the dawn of the 21st century, we use technology at work, at home, in school, and while on the move. The keynote will discuss how participatory design and the IT instruments and alternatives developed have been used in the change processes at work. Moreover, it will elaborate on possible ways of responding to these new challenges.

### **Design processes: managing continuity and discontinuity between present and future activity**

Professor François Daniellou, Université Victor Segalen Bordeaux 2, France

Activity theories emphasize the need to deeply understand the users' present activity before starting any redesign process, either on a technical or on an organizational system. This insistence should not be interpreted as a token of unbroken continuity between the users' present activity and their future actions, the determinants of which will be similar to the present situation only in certain aspects. Designing systems does not equal adapting them to the observed activity, but rather entails the creation of new

space for the development of future activity. An ergonomic contribution to design processes has to be based both on activity analysis and on the anticipation of future activity, particularly through simulations. The management of these should allow different actors to influence and debate the level and details of continuity to be retained as well as the discontinuities to be introduced in the system design. The keynote will describe some conditions and consequences of this negotiation concerning design orientations based on simulations of future workplaces.

### **Change, development and intervention at work: toward a formative methodology**

Professor Yrjö Engeström, University of Helsinki, Finland

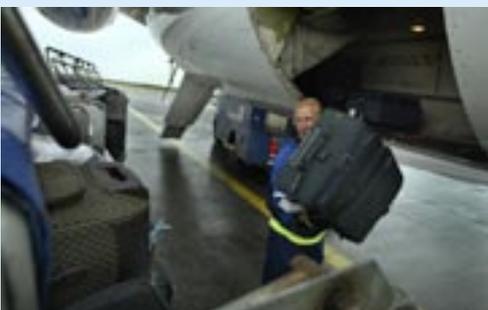
The well-established notion of high-risk and high-reliability (high-R) work organizations needs to be supplemented and perhaps partially replaced with the emerging notion of a high-greed and high-globalization (high-G) work organization. The former is traditionally associated with a primacy on continuity, stability, and well-bounded centres of control and co-ordination. The latter is associated with temporal and spatial discontinuity, crisis-like transformations, and drifting. Disasters in the former are primarily understood to be rooted in technological complexity and human limitations (e.g. nuclear disasters), whereas in the latter they are seen as rooted in market volatility and human excesses (e.g. the Enron disaster). I will examine the shift from high-R to high-G as a theoretical and methodological challenge in three steps: (1) The shift challenges us to reconceptualize change and to place the management of change at the core of our notions of expertise and learning. (2) The transition also invites us to re-examine what we mean by development, and, in particular, it calls for an understanding of development as breaking away from old patterns and opening up of unknown possibilities, often through sideways moves rather than through vertical improvement along a predetermined path. (3) The shift calls for rigorous interventionist research methodologies, such as those based on the Vygotskian principle of double stimulation.



### **Reliability management as an individual/collective development process: a constructive ergonomics viewpoint**

Professor Pierre Falzon, Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM), France

Classical approaches to reliability have followed various paths aiming either at the elimination of errors (through automation or proceduralization of activities) or at detecting and correcting them before they have consequences (through the provision of detection aids or through the reciprocal surveillance of team members). It is argued that these approaches share a static view of work activities: sociotechnical systems are viewed as stable (while in fact they evolve over time; cf. the migration issue) and problems are seen as recurrent (while in actuality they change or can be borderline). Another approach is proposed, in which reliability is construed as the permanent sharing, discussion and construction of knowledge about work, work situations, and rules for decision-making. Rather than attempting to make available a solution for any problem that may occur, the solution is to strengthen group awareness and shared knowledge. In this constructive ergonomics perspective, an enabling environment is an environment that allows the individual and the group to constantly learn through experience and reflective activity. This approach will be illustrated by field studies in therapeutic decision-making and risk management.



## **Abstracts**

Abstracts for presentations concerning methods, methodologies and concepts in analyzing activities for work development are invited.

### **Guidelines for abstract**

- length between 300 and 500 words
- font Times New Roman, 12 points, single line spacing, left aligned
- one blank line between title, author and the text
- abstract title must be typed in capital letters, font size 14, bold
- possible sections: problem under study, objectives, methods, results, discussion and conclusion

Please submit the abstract using the abstract submission form at [www.ttl.fi/activity2008](http://www.ttl.fi/activity2008) by **3 December 2007** at latest.

Notice of acceptance will be e-mailed to you by 15 January 2008.

## **Language**

The official language of the Symposium is English.

## **Registration**

### **Please register via the Internet at [www.ttl.fi/activity2008](http://www.ttl.fi/activity2008)**

Participants should register using the online registration form available at [www.ttl.fi/activity2008](http://www.ttl.fi/activity2008). All reservations (incl. social programme and hotel) should be made on the same registration form. This also applies to the programme that is included in the registration fee.

## **Symposium fees**

	Early fee until 14 March 2008	Late fee after 15 March 2008
Delegate	250 EUR	350 EUR

Conference fee includes VAT 0%

The registration fee for delegates includes admission to the scientific sessions, Symposium material, refreshments during breaks and lunches, a Helsinki City Transport travel ticket for three days, Helsinki City reception, and information services during the Symposium.

Please note that the Symposium dinner, travel costs, hotel accommodation, and insurance are not included in the registration fee.

## Social programme

Please register for the social programme with the Symposium online registration form.

### Helsinki City reception

Monday, 12 May 2008 at 19.30-21.00

The City of Helsinki cordially invites all participants and accompanying persons to a reception in the City Hall of Helsinki. City reception is included in the registration fee.

### Symposium dinner

Tuesday, 13 May 2008 at 19.00-23.00 on Suomenlinna islands just off Helsinki.

The 250-year-old construction of the sea fortress was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991.

**The price of 80 EUR, includes dinner and a presentation about the islands' history.**

## Payment and confirmation

All payments (registration fees, hotel deposit) should be made in advance in euros (€) in connection with the registration. When registering online, you will receive instant confirmation of successful registration to your email.

### Payment options:

- credit card: Visa, MasterCard and Eurocard are accepted.

- bank transfer to the Symposium account.

Bank: OKO Bank plc

Address: PO BOX 308, FI-00101 Helsinki

Bank account: 573008-2352843

IBAN: FI8557300820352843

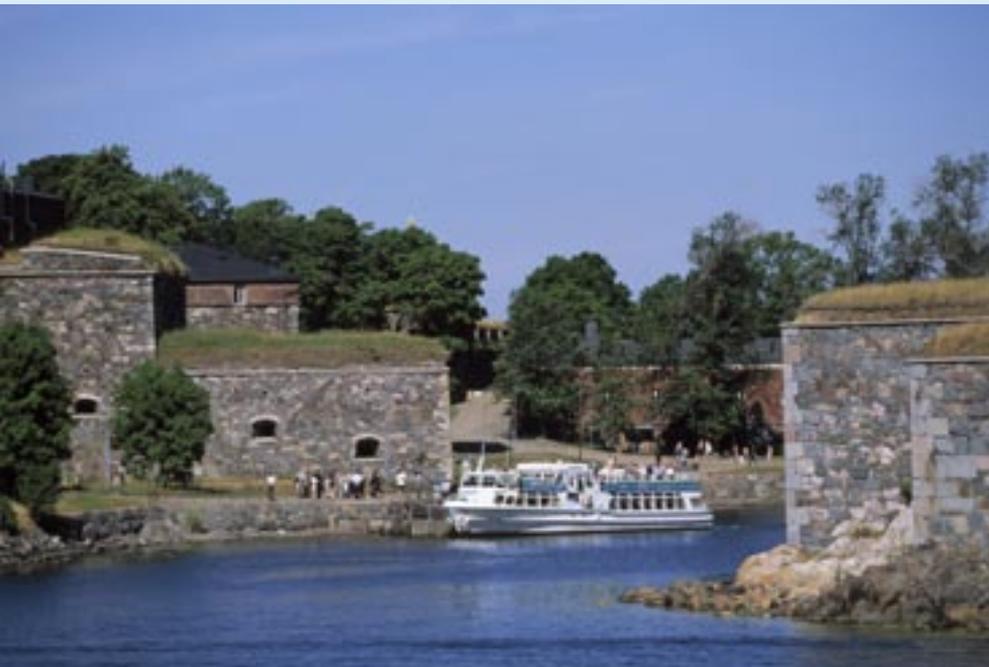
(for money transfers from EU-countries only)

SWIFT / BIC code: OKOYFIHH

Account holder: Activity2008 Symposium

## Accommodation

Delegates should make their hotel reservation in advance on the Conference Registration Form.



## Organizer

### Technical committee ATWAD

The organizer, the Technical Committee ATWAD of the International Ergonomics Association aims at creating a community of ergonomists and human factors specialists interested in activity theoretical approaches in a broad sense, and at increasing international collaboration between scientists and practitioners. Chairman Pascal Béguin (email [beguin@cnam.fr](mailto:beguin@cnam.fr)).

### National organizing committee

*Yrjö Engeström*

University of Helsinki, Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research

*Kirsti Launis, Chairperson of the Committee*

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

*Jorma Mäkitalo*

Verve (former Merikoski Rehabilitation and Research Centre)

*Leena Norros*

VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland

*Sirpa Rauas-Huhtanen*

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

*Laura Seppänen, Secretary General*

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

### The Symposium will be hosted by four Finnish organizations:

- **The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health**

See <http://www.ttl.fi/internet/english>

- **VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland**

See <http://www.vtt.fi/?lang=en>

- **University of Helsinki, Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research**

See <http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/activity/>

- **Verve** (former Merikoski Rehabilitation and Research Centre)

See <http://www.verve.fi/activity/>



Detailed information about the registration, accommodation, cancellation and refund policy as well as the Symposium hotels will be available at Symposium website [www.ttl.fi/activity2008](http://www.ttl.fi/activity2008).

## Practical arrangements

If you have questions concerning registration, accommodation, or travelling arrangements, please contact

TAVI Congress Bureau  
Noora Bergroth-Rantanen  
Papinkatu 21  
FI-33200 Tampere, Finland  
Email: [activity2008@tavicon.fi](mailto:activity2008@tavicon.fi)  
Tel: +358 3 233 0450  
Fax: +358 3 233 0444

## Scientific programme

In case of questions concerning the scientific programme, please contact [activity2008@ttl.fi](mailto:activity2008@ttl.fi)

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Heli Heikkilä  
Topeliuksenkatu 41 a A  
FI-00250 Helsinki, Finland  
Email: [activity2008@ttl.fi](mailto:activity2008@ttl.fi)  
Tel. +358 30 474 2706  
Fax: +358 30 474 2008

## Important dates

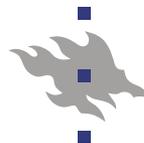
Call for papers available early September 2007

Deadline for abstracts	3 December 2007
Notice of acceptance of abstracts	15 January 2008
Early registration until	14 March 2008
Deadline for cancelling	31 March 2008
Symposium	12-14 May 2008

Symposium site: [www.ttl.fi/activity2008](http://www.ttl.fi/activity2008)



Finnish Institute of  
Occupational Health



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



Société d'ergonomie  
de Langue Française

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