Sociomaterial Practices in the Age of Open, 7.5 hp

The aim of this doctoral course is to introduce a selection of theories of sociomaterial practice and use those to explore openness, particularly open innovation, in the emerging networked society with its reliance on advanced information and communication technology (ICT). The course explores the so-called ‘practice turn’ in relation to openness and issues of pragmatism, communication, anchoring practices and (socio)materiality through illustrative cases from different industries and sectors of society.

Several industries have increasingly come to put their focus on innovation and innovative capacity. While much attention has focused on technology transfer, translational research and even social innovation, what is less clear is to what extent openness and open innovation could be a viable part of organizations’ work practices. Open innovation traditionally refers to, “the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation and expand the markets for external use of innovation”. Open innovation thus suggest a framework for how to leverage contemporary ICT for the benefit of both companies and their customers. Yet, a fundamental practical and theoretical puzzle remains for practicing open innovation in organizations — that is, how to create and sustain the required engagement among stakeholders to realize open innovation as a management strategy in the networked society?

Throughout the course, open innovation will serve as an object of inquiry and variations of practice-oriented theory will be used to examine open innovation and related aspects of openness in the contemporary interactive and networked society. The overarching, guiding questions for the course are: What is openness? What is open practice?

Examination

Participants are expected to present and defend in a seminar an article manuscript or a research proposal. Active participation in all sessions is required.

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Organization

There are five two-day sessions, starting at 10am day one, finishing at 3pm day two. The course starts with an introductory session on practice-oriented theories and open innovation. Three working sessions follows, and the course concludes with a final wrap-up session.

Pre-work for the working sessions includes ‘observing’ some set of ‘organizations’ implementing ‘open practices’ (of the student’s own choice) and analyze from the basis of a particular practice theory. All participants are also expected to read the selected literature in preparation for each session.

Session 1: Introduction
March 2–3

Content: Introduction to the course

Practice theory and practical theories, including
-- various practice (practical) theories
-- sociomateriality
-- critical realism
-- social ontology, boundary objects
-- pragmatism, grounding in communication, communication design

Concepts of openness and open innovation, including
-- open and user innovation
-- commons based peer production
-- opensourcing and crowdsourcing
-- citizen journalism and open publishing

Outcome: Ontological mapping of action and practice-oriented theories
Initiation of an encyclopedia of openness
Commitments to the practice theory(s) to pursue and open innovation approach(es) to pursue

Material: Readings that review pragmatism and practice
Readings that review empirical research that draws on practice concepts
Readings that review open concepts and practices

Faculty: Mark Aakhus, Pär Ågerfalk, Mats Edenius, Jenny Eriksson Lundström, Claes Thorén
Session 2: Setting the terrain – Faculty experiences
March 16–17

Content: Guided discussions that provide a focus on ongoing research projects.
          Revisiting student projects.
          Further strategizing how to collectively build the practice map and the openness encyclopedia.

Material: Selected papers on faculty’s own research in the area of the course

Faculty: Mark Aakhus, Pär Ågerfalk, Mats Edenius, Jenny Eriksson Lundström

Session 3: Open innovation as sociomaterial practice
April 13–14

Content: Guided discussions that provide a focus on ‘open innovation as sociomaterial practice’.
          Revisiting student projects.
          Collectively building the practice map and openness encyclopedia, ctd.

Material: Readings that review open innovation and sociomateriality

Faculty: Pär Ågerfalk, Jenny Eriksson Lundström

Session 4: Communication as design
May 4–5

Content: Guided discussions that provide a focus on ‘communication as design’.
          Revisiting student projects.
          Collectively building the practice map and openness encyclopedia, ctd.

Material: Readings that review communication as design

Faculty: Mark Aakhus, Pär Ågerfalk

May 18: Deadline for submitting student projects
Session 5: Conclusion and wrap-up
May 19–20

Content:  Presentation and discussion of student projects. Concluding the practice map and openness encyclopedia.

Faculty:  Mark Aakhus, Pär Ågerfalk, Mats Edenius, Jenny Eriksson Lundström

Faculty

Course leader:  Dr. Mark Aakhus, Rutgers University and Uppsala University
Facilitators:  Prof. Pär Ågerfalk, Uppsala University
Prof. Mats Edenius, Uppsala University
Dr. Jenny Eriksson Lundström, Uppsala University

Course Administration and Registration

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Literature


