

Talking You Through

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Propositions belonging to the dissertation

Talking You Through

The Shifting Socio-Technical Practices of Radio Traffic News, 1950s-now

Marith Dieker

1. The history of radio traffic news in Germany, the Netherlands and the New York region reveals how practices of developing and using technology, and the meanings ascribed to these practices, are shaped by local socio-technical contexts. That an innovation ‘works’ in one context does not guarantee that it will also work in another.
2. The *Autofahrer Rundfunk Information* (ARI) system, developed in Germany between 1969 and 1974, became the starting point of a technological trajectory that continues to affect present-day traffic information broadcasting systems across the globe.
3. Contextual factors explain the shifts in the presentation of radio traffic information, yet the key to flow on the radio lies in reporters’ and radio hosts’ professional expertise.
4. The car radio is an important technology for finding solace on the road. Through aural entertainment drivers reappropriate the time they would otherwise merely spend in traffic.
5. Researchers, engineers and policymakers would do well to revisit past projects, efforts and concepts before they start developing new ideas, models or trajectories.
6. Qualitative research methods add flesh to the bones of quantitative research and intervention initiatives, and can help to align good intentions with people’s practices in the process. Humanities scholars therefore need to contribute to the development of sustainable innovations.
7. Scholars in the field of Science, Technology and Society Studies (STS) often conduct interdisciplinary studies. This can make it difficult to explain to researchers in disciplinary fields what we do or what we know, but also enables us to create fruitful exchanges between existing research traditions.
8. We should approach research the way we approach our loved ones: with an open mind and with respect in case of disagreement. Science and its practices can become more engaged if we follow similar principles for judging the value or impact of our efforts.
9. Despite the increased scholarly attention for sensing sound, Western languages have a strong visual bias and offer limited vocabulary for capturing sound’s precise role in our everyday lives.
10. The discourse on sustainable mobility is currently dominated by ecological concerns and aims at the reduction of polluting emissions. Yet for a radical reduction of those emissions on the short term we rapidly need to move on towards a more plant-based diet.