

Katja Schönián, MA
PhD candidate
Department of Sociology
Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna
Schoenian@ihs.ac.at

STS Conference Graz 2014 “Critical Issues in Science and Technology Studies”
May 05-06, 2014
GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Abstract submission **Special Session 7: “The politics of ICTs”**

Intranet software has in a short period of time become a dominant management tool in contemporary office life. Intranets come about in a variety of forms; they move between simple file sharing tools and more sophisticated platforms integrating social media features. As such, they are intended to not only organise internal business communications but to possibly change a company’s ‘corporate culture’, for instance by promoting new ways of knowledge exchange and sharing.

In this paper I report from my fieldwork on the implementation of a new intranet in a large company that has recently gone through a merger. First of all, I will illuminate the (managerial) expectations towards the implementation of this software and, furthermore, add to these expectations insights I have gained from interviews and observations conducted in a variety of departments across the company.

In doing so, I attempt to show the rather intricate ways in which the software is part of the organisation. That is, even though at first sight the intranet appears as a management tool fostering top-down a unified company, employees also develop various strategies trying to escape and undermine this logic. Thus, the intranet appears as rather ambivalent in the way it entangles with various work practices and settings and thereby sustains but also alters dominant logics in the company.