



**Workshop:**  
**Communication and ICT in Healthcare: Theory and Practice**

**Communication and ICT in Health Care – a Theoretical Perspective**

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**Abstract**

In this presentation we will present a model for analysing the impact of ICT on communication processes. Our starting point will be the cognitive-affective model of organizational communication, as proposed by Te'eni [1]. Based on this model we will propose a set of features that can be used to describe communication processes. The main effect of ICT support of the communication process will be the decoupling of the participants. This means that ICT enables participants to choose different values for the features distinguished in the model. A well known example are the features 'time' and 'place'. ICT (e.g. e-mail) enables participants to take part in the communication process at the time and from the location of their own choice. Reducing dependencies in this way is interesting from an organizational perspective, because it enables the participants to organize their own activities more efficiently.

However, decoupling also has drawbacks. It potentially increases the complexity of the communication process, leading to misunderstandings and, in the end, a severe decrease of the effectiveness of the communication. For example, decoupling in time and place removes what Clark [2] has called the *immediacy* of the participants. As a result, less information on receipt and uptake of communicated information is exchanged. If I send an e-mail out to someone, I am unaware of whether it is read and understood. However, if I am taking part in a face to face meeting, linguistic and para-linguistic information informs me about this. Based on an analysis of these drawbacks we will address the following two questions:

In which situations will decoupling by means of ICT have adverse effects?

Which requirements can be derived for ICT applications, based on an analysis of the effects of decoupling?

References

1. [Te'eni, D., 2001, *Review: A cognitive-affective model of organisational communication for designing IT*, in: MIS Quarterly, vol. 25 (2), pp. 251-312.
2. Clark, H.H., 1996, *Using Language*, Cambridge University Press

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