



#1928573 Collaborative Research: FW-HTF-RM: Augmentation for Tomorrow: Expanding the Future Capacities of Independent Workers

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Latest Research Product: Workers Accomplishing Independence

Phase I Findings

Currently finalizing journal article for *Science, Technology and Human Values* (STHV) about how independent workers accomplish their independence.

We build on Suchman’s theory of *articulation work* (1996) to argue that workers’ independence is an ongoing, effortful accomplishment that typically draws on two types of “structuring moves”: **anticipatory** (pre-emptive) and **adaptive** (real-time).

Structuring moves are constrained by the “densities” that define the professional and non-professional aspects of a worker’s life. We define ‘density’ as the degree to which a person feels obligation to others.

Moves are also enabled and constrained by the different **resources** that a worker has to hand. Resources include money, space, social connections, technology, and time—the latter being the only fixed resource that everyone shares despite it being experienced differently.

One tool I use on days like today is the voice memo app on my phone....In those brief moments I'll work on a new song or piece of music for a specific project. Because I know my time is limited and I'm afraid I'll lose or forget what I was creating, I'll record what I'm working on with the voice memo app. This is the fastest and easiest way to get down a musical idea and allows me to come back to it easily.

- AL (audio engineer), adaptive structuring move, tech resource



It was raining so that day was dark and dreary. I turned the lights on bright and spread out on the dining room table... I could see my family come in and out of the ditch but I was removed from the chaos.

-KG (writer), anticipatory structuring move, space resource

Upcoming Research: Phase II Design Workshops

Independent Work in a Time of Uncertainty

Conducting a comprehensive interview + diary study of independent workers who have experienced a major change since 2020. This will allow us to further refine the **interview + diary method**, examine with greater specificity the **pervasive uncertainty** these workers are facing, and honor the COVID19 experience in these data without focusing only on the effect of the pandemic on independent work.

Timeline: Summer 2022 - Winter 2023

Designing for Augmentation Workshops

Our illustrations of structuring moves act as analytical tools in our grounded theory method. In the next phase, we plan to use our research for speculative design workshops.

Timeline: Summer 2023-Fall 2023

