

**« Anthropology and Ergonomics in Designing Innovations :
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Introduction

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Designing technical innovations has let aside real operators' practices as well as the social and cultural contexts in which they are situated. They are nevertheless a crucial issue regarding their integration in society. When technical aspects are not considered in the field of an anthropology which does not pay sufficient attention to the role played by technical artefacts, their importance has been recognized for a long time in the field of Ergonomics. On the other side Ergonomics do not have the necessary tools for studying the role played by social factors in the work practices they analyse in order to transform them. Actually, this confrontation of viewpoints based on the identification of the limits inherent to each approach can be seen as potentially constructive. Looking closer, it opens a space towards the building of a transdisciplinary approach which in the past has proved fruitful when applied in response to social urgings.

The study of technical practices (both designers' and users' ones) is at the very center of ergonomists' activity which is oriented to the design or re-design of new work settings. This approach is emblematic of the french-speaking tradition of Ergonomics for more than thirty years now. Anthropologists, and more precisely the few ones who have been working on technology and on the building process of knowledge centered on technical objects, put emphasis on practices and so forth build bridges with ergonomists. Nevertheless, when using ethnographics based approach, Anthropology can provide an original contribution to the empirical study of situations by putting facts in their own social and cultural context. This approach can be seen as complementary to Ergonomics which stress on the immediate context of action. Some years ago putting together these two fields led to the creation of a new field of research known as « Anthropotechnology ».

Based on examples drawn for real situations we present different contributions from this field of research which is a field of intervention for the scientific as well. It enables him/her to get closer to social realities and to make more visible his/her own role in the society...