

Table 1: Summary of the characteristics affording informal interaction in the three field studies

Key Characteristics

Affordances	Key Characteristics		
	Location	Layout	Material Form & Function
	Proximity <i>Functional Centrality</i> The environment is near a functional center of the office—near the entrance, lavatories, stairwell, or other place regularly visited by people throughout the day. RC: + PH: + BS: 0 Importance: HIGH	<i>Visibility; Accessibility; Size of Space</i> People in the environment can see those passing it and vice versa. The environment is easy to enter. The space is small enough to obligate people to encounter each other. RC: 0 PH: + BS: 0 Importance: HIGH	<i>Shared Resources</i> Photocopier, water-cooler, coffee machine, office supplies, etc. Reasons that many different kinds of people need to enter the environment regularly. RC: + PH: + BS: 0 Importance: MEDIUM
	Privacy <i>Remoteness; Isolation</i> The environment is not central so that not many people are passing by it or through it that could oversee or overhear interactions. RC: – PH: – BS: 0 Importance: MEDIUM	<i>Enclosure; Outward Visibility; Egress</i> The environment is enclosed so that the spatial boundaries of the interaction may be maintained. People in the environment are able to monitor those passing or entering it. Barriers to exit are low. RC: + PH: + BS: + Importance: HIGH	<i>No function</i> For ideal privacy, there would no reason for anyone ever to enter the environment. RC: – PH: – BS: – Importance: LOW
Legitimacy	<i>Local; Usual</i> The environment is an obvious place for people to be or to pass through. It is not so remote, or unusual, or untrafficked that significance is attached to interaction there. RC: + PH: + BS: + Importance: LOW	<i>Open Doors</i> Interactions in environments with open doors may seem more innocent and less worthy of note. RC: + PH: + BS: + Importance: LOW	<i>Shared Resources; Mindless Presence</i> The environment contains work-related resources that all people employ and that demand presence but little mental energy to utilize. People are thus free for recruitment in interaction. RC: + PH: + BS: 0 Importance: HIGH

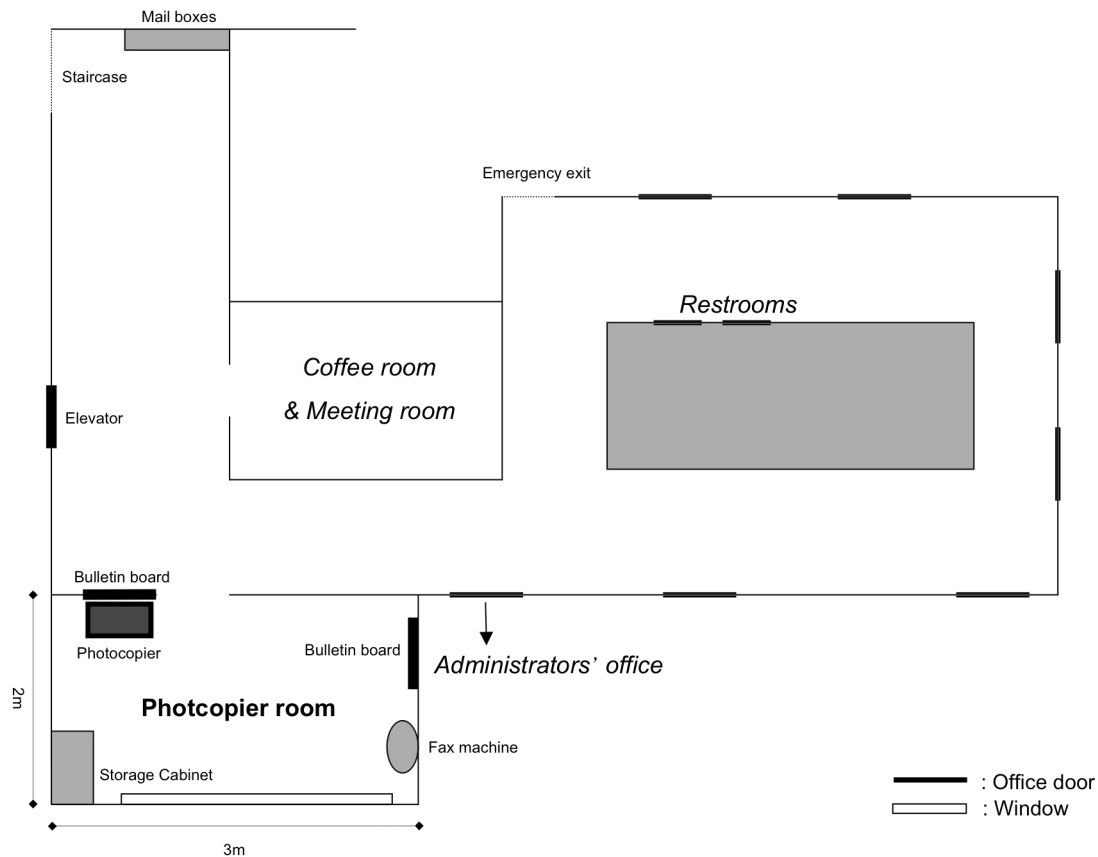
Table 2: Themes and types of discussion in informal interactions

Theme	Type	Example	Frequency		
			RC	PH	BS
Copier			+++	++	+
	Helping and collaborating	Valeria, a secretary comes in the copier room. Jane, a junior professor is making copies of a book. Valeria suggests a more efficient way to do copies using a book-copying capability built into the copier. Jane who had tried it several times unsuccessfully, preferred to stick to the old way. They chat while Jane is making her copies. The copier stops and an error message pops up. Jane tries to solve the problem following the instructions on the copier screen. After several unsuccessful trials, Valeria suggests to put the paper in another direction. She tries successfully. (BS) Mary, the head of a group is in the copier room trying to make double-sided copies, but she keeps getting an error message. She is staring at the copier, muttering and pushing buttons in all directions. John, the Head of the Department comes in and picks up a fax. On his way back, he pauses at the door and asks her what is her problem. She explains him. He goes and starts helping her. They check the manual, try out different solutions and finally succeed in making double-sided copies. (RC)	+++	++	+
	Teaching and learning	Eva is copying and stapling a job. Mary is lining to make copies. She sees the first stapled job coming out and she asked: "Oh, you know how to use the stapling function. That's useful! I don't know how to use it. Can you show me, please?" Eva shows her. (PH)	++	++	0
	Negotiating access	Eva is making copies. Dabney comes in and stands nearby the copier. Eva looks up and tells her that her job is long, and that she will better come back in a while. (PH) Katherine is using the copier machine. Debbie comes in and asks her: "Is it going to take a while?" Katherine answers that she has another set of copies to do. Debbie says that she will come back later. She leaves. (PH) Ann is making copies. Two other persons are lining for the copier. Justin comes in while Ann is finishing her job. He goes to the copier and starts doing his copies, telling the two other persons "It won't be long. I have only 3 copies to make. I'm in rush." He makes his copies and leaves. (RC) There was a senior researcher, Erin, who apparently was well-known in the department for making huge amounts of copies. The copier machine was also the shared printer. Long copying jobs might be interrupted by printing jobs arriving over the network. When this happened, Erin would complain angrily to whomever then came to pick up their print job. One of her colleagues told us that once she was about to go pick up a job that she had just printed but, when she heard Erin in the copier room complaining, she turned around and went back to her office instead.	+++	+++	0

Theme	Type	Example	RC	PH	BS
Work			++	+++	0
	Exchanging information	Eva is putting together some copies that she did of articles on a book that they have just published. Margot comes in to pick up her mail. She says, “Hello,” and while skipping through her mail, asks Eva what she is doing. Eva replies and they discuss the book and its success. (PH) Joana is making copies. Claudia comes in. Joana looks surprised. She tells Claudia that she has not seen her for a while. Claudia was on holidays. After talking about the holidays, Joana asked Claudia on which project and with whom she is working [Claudia is a freelancer]. Claudia replies that she just started working with Margot on a new book, and she said that she really likes working with her. They talked for a while about Margot and previous projects on which Claudia worked. (PH)	++	++	+
	Collaborating and following up	Gerry is making copies. Ann comes in to take a notebook and some pens. While looking in the supply cabinet, she asks Gerry if she had called someone she was supposed to call for a joint project. Gerry replies she does not have time, but will do it today. (RC) Charles comes in, while Ann is making copies. He tells her that he just got an email with some information regarding a project they are working on together. (RC)	++	+	0
	Politics and gossip	Rachel is making copies and Sophie comes in to make a copy. Rachel says that won't take long. So Sophie decides to stay. While waiting she looks at the bulletin board and sees a newspaper article mentioning one of their colleagues who has just published a novel. She is surprised and asks Rachel if she knew. Rachel did know and tells her a bit more about this book and a previous novel that this colleague wrote. Rachel then asks Sophie if she has fewer arguments with her boss these days. Sophie tells her about a recent crisis. Rachel empathizes and tells her other stories she has heard about Sophie's boss. (RC)	++	++	0
Life			++	++	+
	Hobbies, family, leisure activities	Joana is making copies. Claudia comes in. Joana looks surprised. She tells Claudia that she has not seen her for a while and that she looks great. She asks her if she was on holidays. Claudia says yes. Joana asks where she went. They talked for 3 minutes about Claudia's holidays. (PH) Valeria is queuing for the copier, while Jane, a junior professor is making copies. They chat and talk about their children. (BS)	++	++	+

Figure 1: Research Center Overview

Floor Plan:

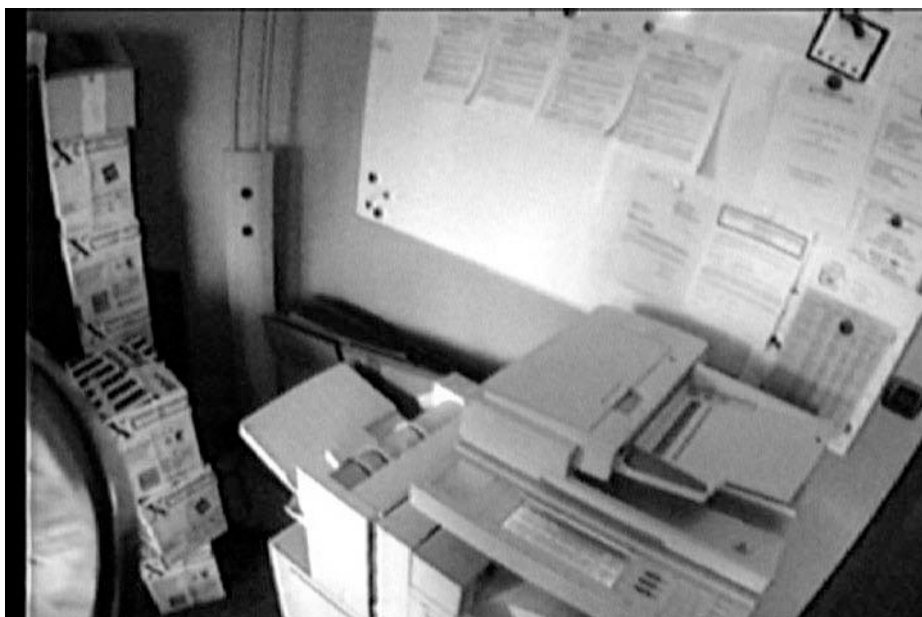


Technical Summary:

<i>Space of department office:</i>	Distributed on two floors
<i>Location of the photocopier room:</i>	Central
<i>Pedestrian traffic past copier room:</i>	Heavy
<i>Windows:</i>	On outside
<i>Size of the department:</i>	20 people
<i>Number of users:</i>	20: 12 frequent users; 8 less frequent users
<i>Average number of people in the copier room when it is not empty:</i>	Between 2 and 3
<i>Percentage of time when it is empty:</i>	30
<i>Who makes the copies:</i>	Everybody
<i>Is there someone in charge of the copier:</i>	Yes
<i>Resources in the room:</i>	Fax machine, photocopier (also functions as printer), office supply cabinet, 2 bulletin boards

Figure 2: Research Center Photos

RC1.



RC2.



RC3.

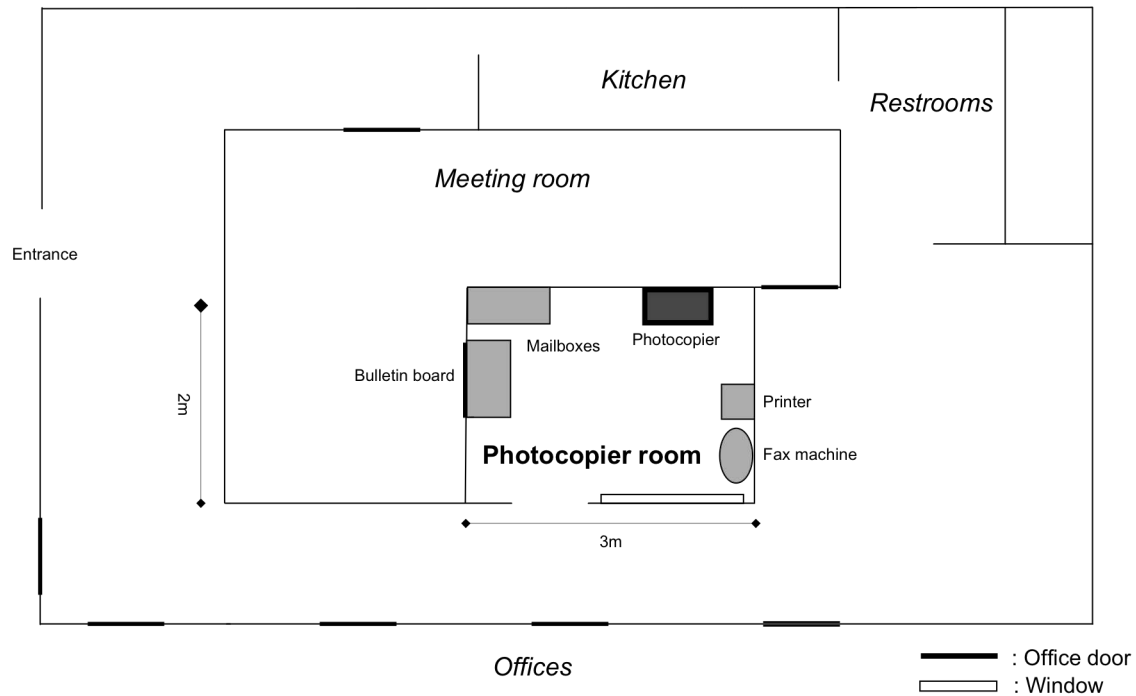


RC4.



Figure 3: Publishing House Overview

Floor Plan:

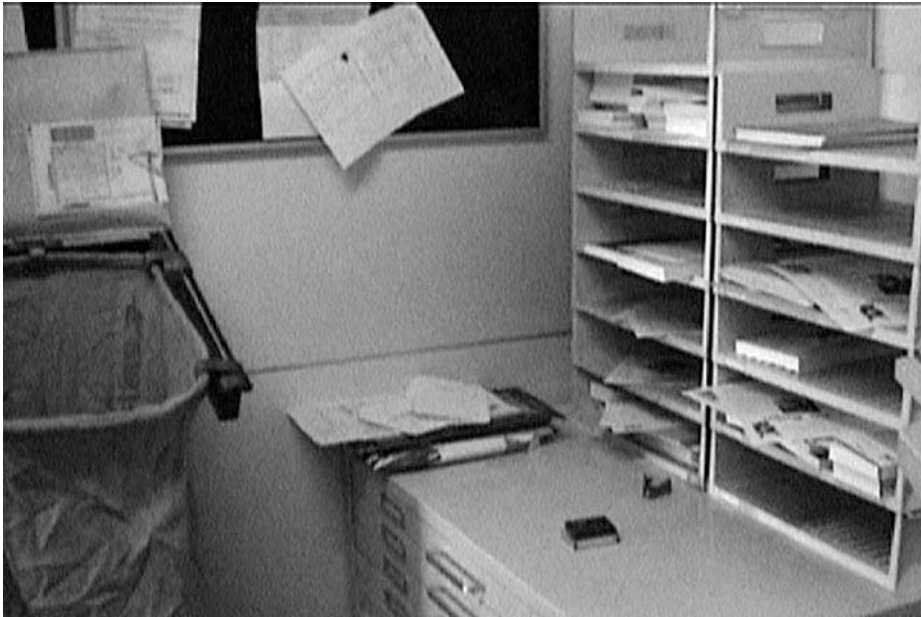


Technical Summary:

<i>Space of department office:</i>	One floor
<i>Location of the photocopier room:</i>	Central
<i>Pedestrian traffic past copier room:</i>	Heavy
<i>Windows:</i>	On the corridor
<i>Size of the department:</i>	8 people
<i>Number of users:</i>	8
<i>Average number of people in the copier room when it is not empty:</i>	Between 3 and 4
<i>Percentage of time when it is empty:</i>	30
<i>Who makes the copies:</i>	Everybody
<i>Is there someone in charge of the copier:</i>	No
<i>Resources in the room:</i>	Fax machine, shared printer, mailboxes, bulletin board, photocopier

Figure 4: Publishing House Photos

PH1.



PH2.



PH3.

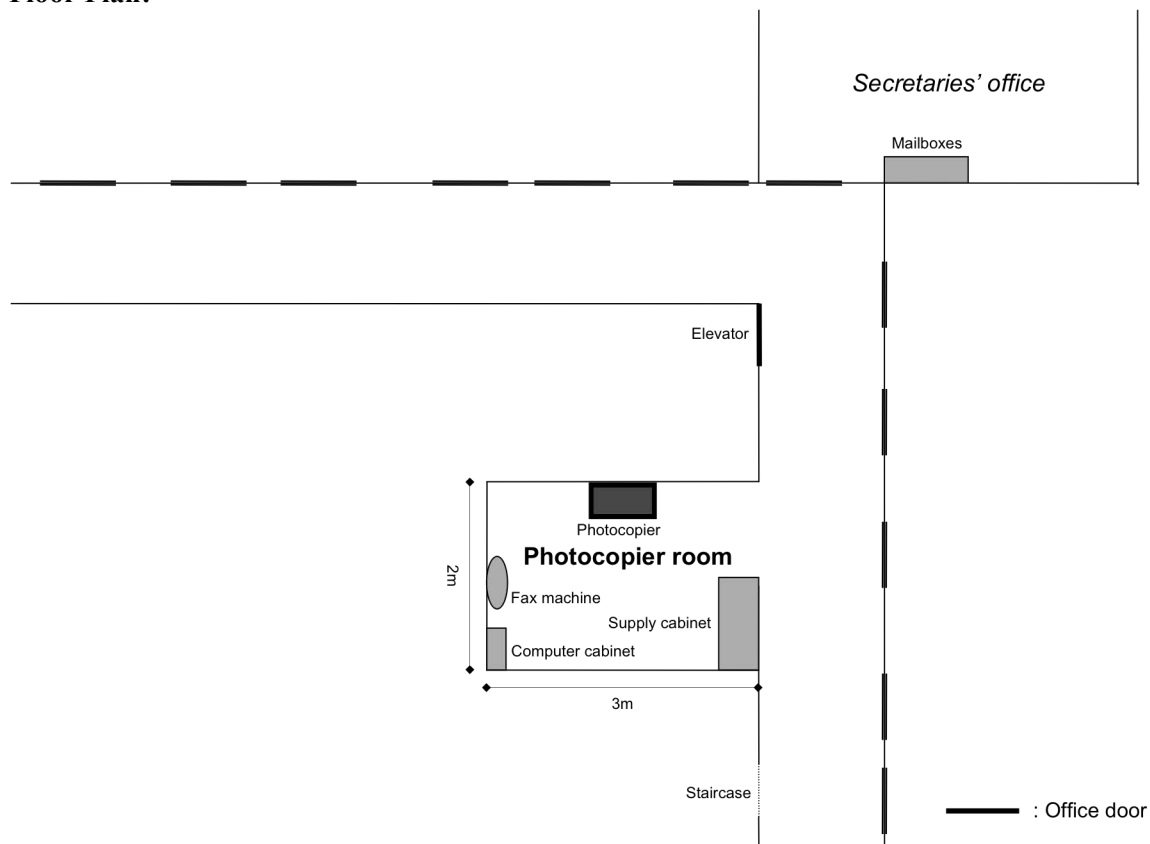


PH4:



Figure 5: Business School Overview

Floor Plan:



Technical Summary:

<i>Space of department office:</i>	Distributed on two floors
<i>Location of the photocopier room:</i>	Isolated
<i>Pedestrian traffic past copier room:</i>	Light
<i>Windows:</i>	None
<i>Size of the department:</i>	20 people
<i>Number of users:</i>	3 frequent users (the secretaries)
<i>Average number of people in the copier room when it is not empty:</i>	1
<i>Percentage of time when it is empty:</i>	80
<i>Who makes the copies:</i>	Mostly the secretaries
<i>Is there someone in charge of the copier:</i>	Yes
<i>Resources in the room:</i>	Fax machine, shared printer, office supply cabinet, photocopier

Figure 6: Business School Photos

BS1.



BS2.



Figure 7: Example Video Stills

VS1.



VS2.



VS3.



VS4.

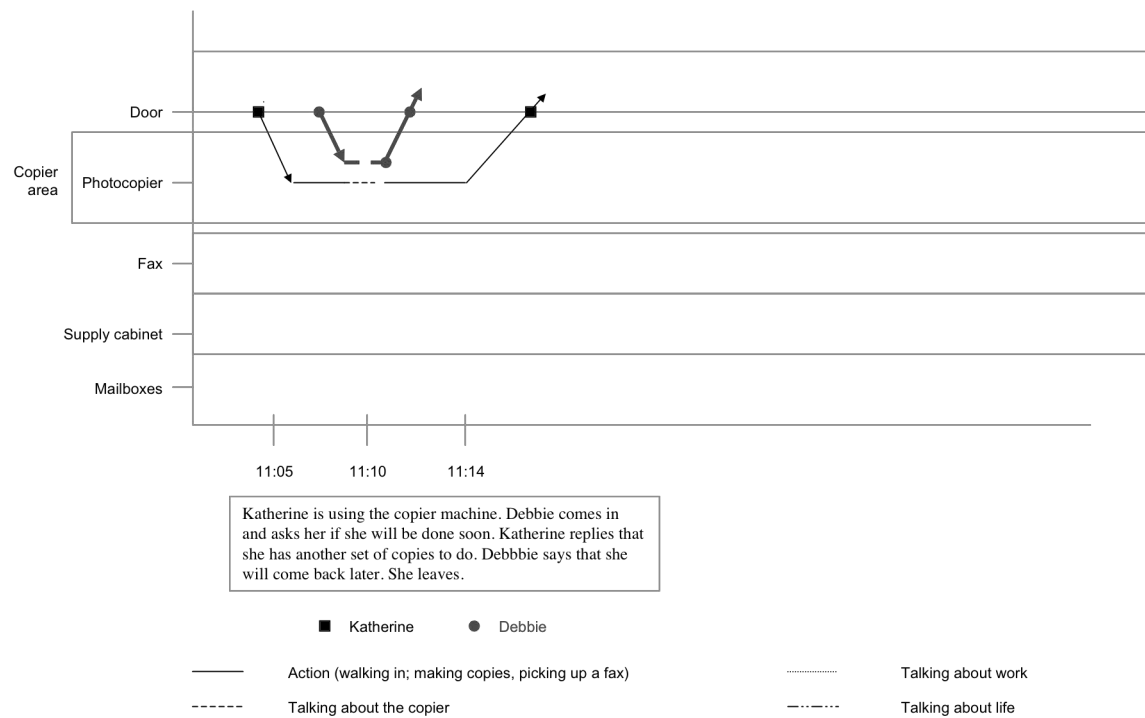


VS5.

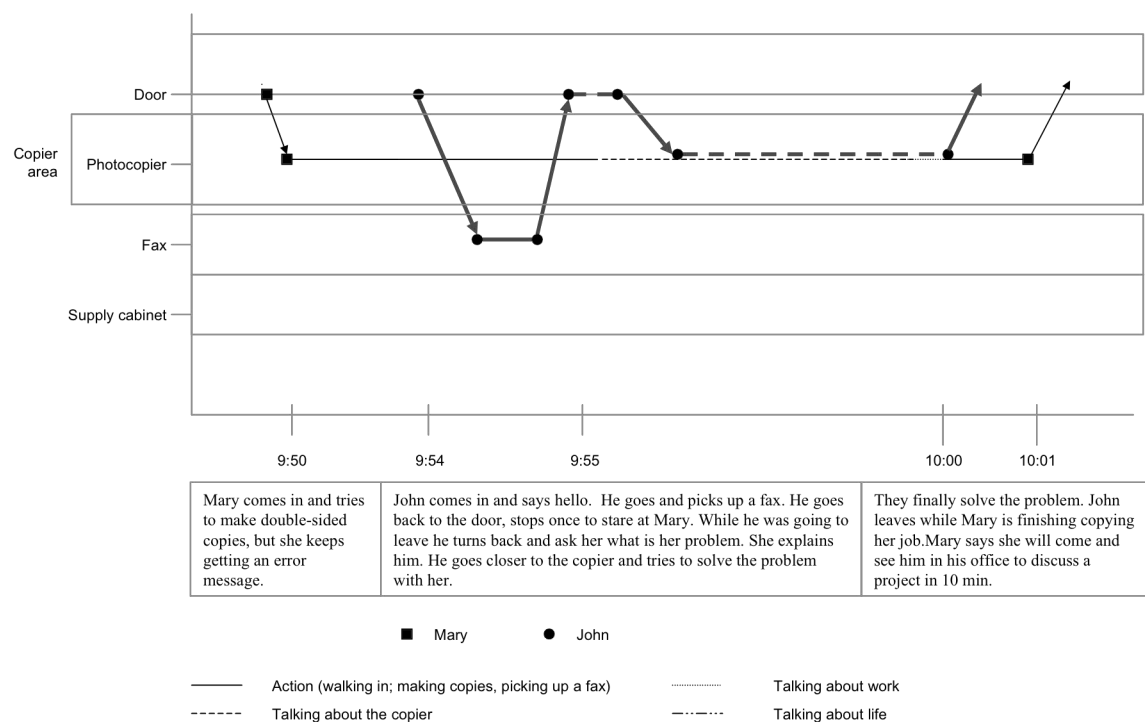


Figure 8: Interaction Maps

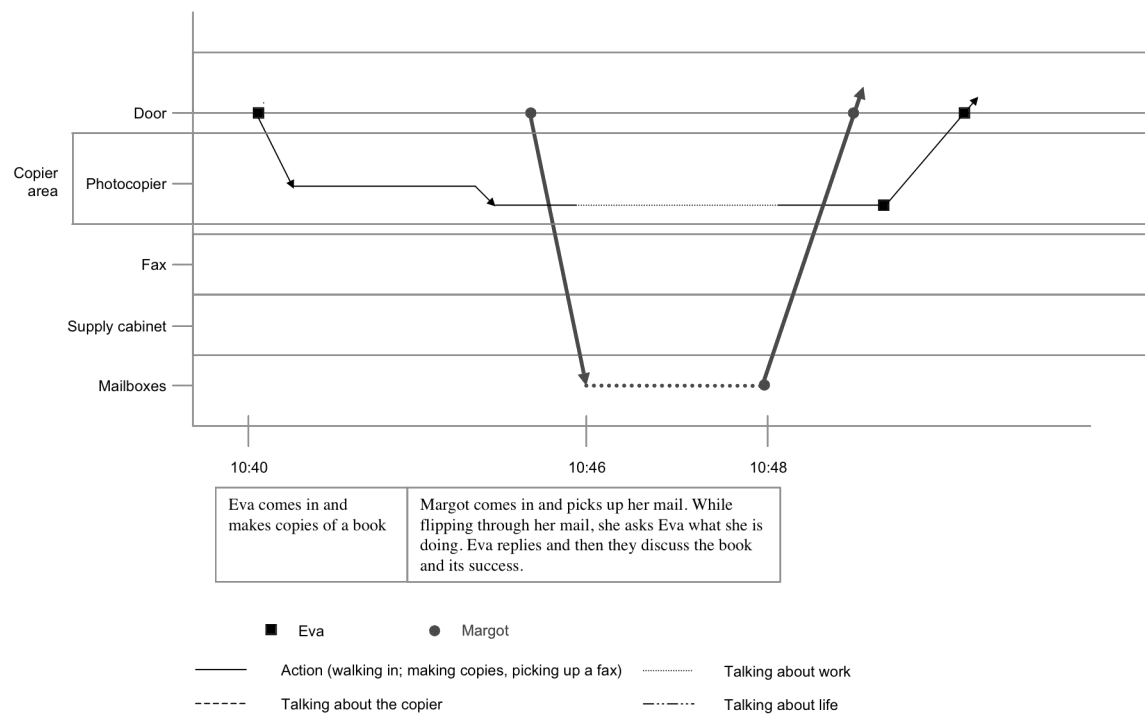
IM1: A simple example of negotiating access at PH



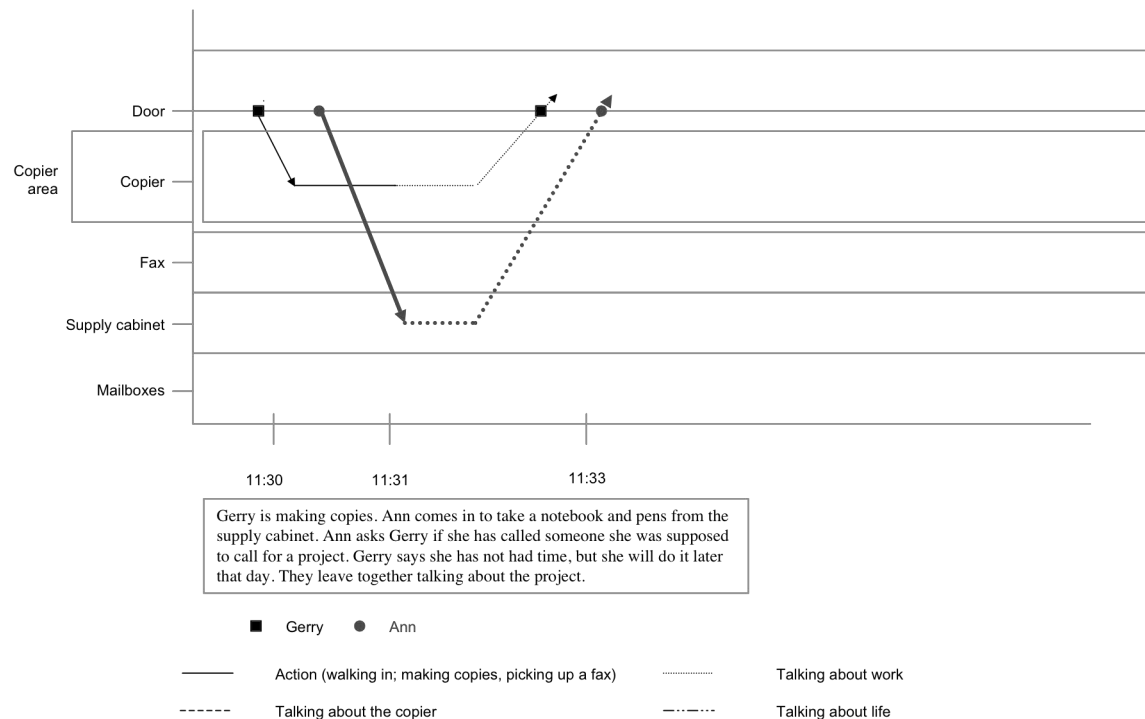
IM2: Collaboration around the copier at RC



IM3: Exchanging information at PH



IM4: Coordinating collaboration at RC



IM5: Intertwined copier-related and life-related discussion at BS

