'Hyperprofessionality', unseen working and evolving forms of academic practice (0197)

Gornall Lynne[1], [1]*WL c/o University of Glamorgan, South Wales, United Kingdom*

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT
Academic work has expanded in all of the lecturer's traditional areas of work – teaching, research, administration (Musselin, 2007). Commenting on the nature of change, Malcolm & Zukas (2009) argue that the reality of academics' work is less clearly delineated, more 'messy', and less amenable to disaggregation than managerialists aspire. However, the role of technology in lecturers' working lives is also part of the story of increased workload, and one that has received relatively little attention, outside of changes in learning and teaching practices (eg Hardy, 2010). While 'extended professionality' (Hoyle & John, 1995) is arguably a tacit 'norm' in HE work today, this paper develops a new concept, 'hyperprofessionality', to move beyond extendedness, as a way of understanding aspects of the new evidence of academic work in the studies below.

THEORY/METHODOLOGY
As part of a funded study of change-narratives in lecturers' everyday working lives (ESRC/WERN 2008-2010), a series of focus groups and interviews were conducted by an interdisciplinary research team (see Cook *et al*, 2009). The research paradigm was informed by the studies of Ball & Goodson (1985), Goodson (2003), but also by the work of Freidson (2001), whose writing on autonomy and discretion in *professional* life has been a key text in delineating forms of control in such occupational sectors. 'Extended professionality' (Hoyle & John, 1995), involving broader professional roles, with collaboration and participation across multiple areas, is also part of the scenario. But something more intense is also evident here. Our research shows that it is not just a question of increases in hours worked, tasks or workload – or experiences of this - that is creating pressure: our term, 'hyperprofessionality' describes a particular sort of intensity of work, that arises in an intricate mix of self-managed work, off-site working (often out of sight), greater administrative requirements arising from all facets of work, and the role and use of ubiquitous technologies that speed production and turnaround of communication.

RESULTS/FINDINGS
Meanings of everyday working life - autonomy and self-management

The roaming workplace
The particular moments of work where informants felt they had the greatest degree of control, ie self-directed and self-managed time, were also those where they engaged in some of the most extensive and intensive activity. They were also the areas that informants most valued and were largely periods of work that were out of conventional hours and away from campus spaces. As Felstead (2008) notes, *"the office comes with us everywhere we go…"*. A particular focus of interest in the interviews was on what will be called here the 'roaming workplace', one that is facilitated by technologies. Paradoxically, these were also the contexts in which the 'hyperprofessional' approach was most evident. It is therefore not simply an effect of 'imposed work' or greater pressure: the intensity of the pressure and workload is created in part by the joint engagement of the individual scholar themselves. The hyperprofessional academic may be someone who, like their PC, rarely switches off.

Virtual or visible working: off-site as 'out of sight'
If 'hyprofessional' attributes were identifiable in mobile and computer-based working, this was nowhere more evident that when informants were working 'from home'. It is possible that intensive, perhaps compulsive, working is most instantiated when staff are working alone and with few distractions: there were no descriptions of 'working on campus' that would

match the sort of reports of working practice, often concerning email, that took place 'out of sight'.

Academics as administrators
Informants appeared to be in states of heightened alertness, prolonged activity or anticipation of requests for response and information. When asked whether a query by email from a student fell into the category of teaching or administration, most said that it was administration, but teaching-related. Categories for research were slightly more equivocal: informants distinguished between research as writing/field-based, and communication *about* research, a broad *administrative* category, that included budgetary activity.

COMMENTARY/IMPLICATIONS
Hyperprofessionalism: "But if we didn't work at home, we wouldn't get our jobs done, end of story"

Lecturers' attention to detail, hyper-awareness, conscientiousness, and drive to produce and complete work is related not only to individuals and core professional values, but also to externally-moderated audit (Strathern, 2000), managerial imperatives (Deem *et al*, 2007) and so on. It is a powerful 'autonomy / accountability' mix and shows itself in activities such as responding to/composing emails, writing reports, checking documents, preparing presentations, searching, downloading or transferring information – and maintaining files and systems. Some of these activities may become excessive, with a propensity to displace more scholarly activity – a key area and issue. A number of other factors are clearly also in play here: a changing material environment and office architectures, with open plan staff areas and fewer private or individual spaces; a valuing of personal IT technologies, and growing competence or expertise in their use, and the ubiquitous availability and access to systems.

Hyperprofessionality is thus a new term, which aims to capture the alignment between the professional, the 'always connected' modality of a 24/7 electronic environment, and our data. This is not empty, repetitive behaviour, but often highly productive professional work. There is too, the pleasure of engagement, of getting things done in a virtual space, using multiple levels or application areas. Turkle's (2007) observation that "*tethered life is complex*" narrates the place of technology as artefact in our lives, an engagement not less intimate because it is mediated.

A longer paper will argue that it is necessary to re-think/re-value emerging forms of professionalism and professionality. There are also important issues for managers, institutions, professional associations and unions here, including the meta-logistics of the modern academic workload – the work of organising the work (whether in a briefcase, laptop or iphone etc) – creating backups and copies, access and filing protocols. Our informants were lyrical about this: but that is a different story.

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