

Relational Empowerment in Teledialogue

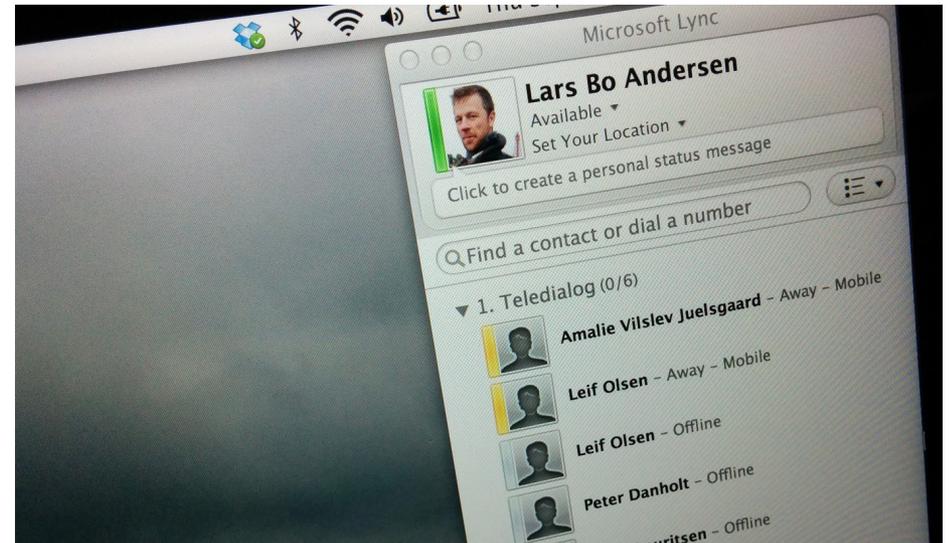
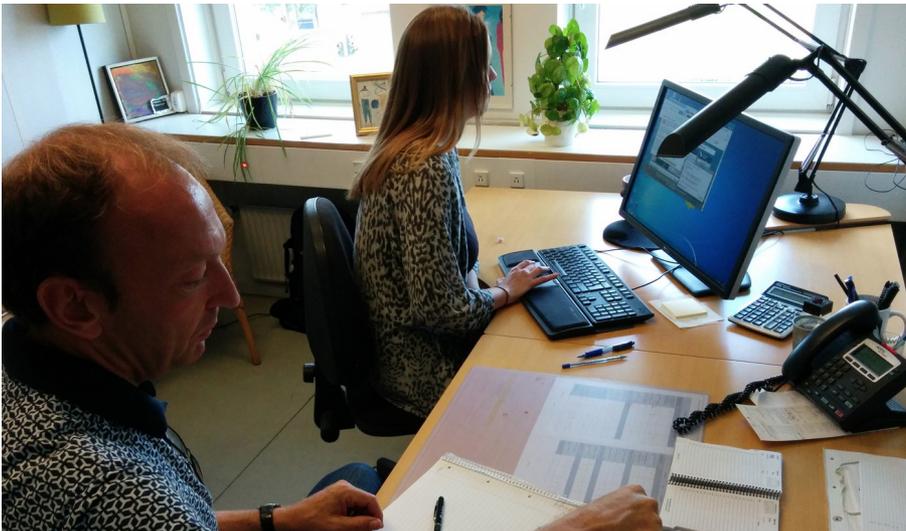
Download paper at www.teledialog.au.dk

Actor-Network Theory



What is Teledialogue?

- Strengthen the dialogue between social workers and placed children through IT and videoconferencing
 - Allow children more influence
 - Help social workers surveil and intervene



(ANT) Points about Empowerment

(1) Empowerment is more a question than an answer

– it is *emergent* in networks of relations

(2) Empowerment *relates* rather than emancipates

– it takes the form of actions upon actions

(3) Empowerment is *compelling*

– it attracts and compels → it carries agency

Empowerment

- Handing over power, set free from power, being related to power (Marx? Foucault?)



Self Care Week

18-24 November 2013



Self care for life – take control

NHS

Empowerment is emergent

- There is nothing inherently empowering about relating social workers and children
 - *But what would happen if we did?*

Boy suffering from brain damage

Splits the world into extremes, you were my best friend but now you are my worst enemy...

- Can videoconferencing calm him down?
- Can videoconferencing help negotiate conflicts?

Girl wants to go home

Social worker wants to protect her from going home to her mother

Disagrees with social worker but also likes him.

- Can videoconferencing enable the girl to share all those little things?
- Can videoconferencing help the social worker *interfere* in all those little things?

Empowerment is relational

- Empowerment relates, it is a relation
- Relational empowerment is elusive, drifting, evading, translating

Lines of flight, for their part, never consist in running away from the world but rather in causing runoffs, as when you drill a hole in a pipe; there is no social system that does not leak from all directions.

(Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 204)

Empowerment is relational

Boy suffering from brain damage

Empowerment = videoconferencing with social worker following conflicts

- Distorts relations to pedagogues and the measures meant to protect him.
- The social worker is drawn into the daily pedagogical practice

Girl wants to go home

Empowerment = videoconferencing every week

- Empowerment fluctuates in and out of existence according to circumstances in the social workers family
- The girl never really tells everything

Empowerment is relational

You need to include the child, to hear them out and consult their opinion. But in my experience, what I most often need to do is to say NO - things will not become as you desire. And that is simply so that I can protect the child against the parents [...] because they have been exposed to some distressing things at home, it is to protect them, and this they are told, they are given this explanation.

(Social worker, interview)

Empowerment is compelling

- Why not simply dismiss this word of bringing into power?
 - Bringing into Foucauldian power?
- Empowerment is compelling
 - Attracts support, relays action, carries agency
 - *Compels* an investigation of the plasma / the virtual / the potential for becoming other
 - to go beyond that which already is (the black box)
- ANT struggles with normativity...