

JANUARY DINNER MEETING
Tuesday January 25, 2005

Consensus and Conflict on the User-Side
*Building Critical Awareness of Work and Workers in the Design Community:
The Case of Ontario Welfare Reform*

Peter H. Sawchuk

Assistant Professor

Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education / Centre for Industrial Relations
University of Toronto, Canada

Ontario taxpayers are on the hook for another \$10 million fee to Accenture to fix some glitches in a computer system the private consultant designed to help the Mike Harris government crack down on welfare fraud. This fiasco could have been prevented...

What lessons can be learned from Ontario's deal with Accenture? Every large-scale work and tech change initiative is full of challenges, difficulties, glitches. But if the previous government had listened to the workers' concerns - rather than valuing the private consultant's expensive viewpoint - Queen's Park might today have the in-house capacity to fix the problem themselves and save taxpayers \$10 million. Three decades of research on computer design all point to the same finding: The user matters. In this case, workers matter.

TRISH HENNESSY AND PETER H. SAWCHUK, The Toronto Star, July 13, 2004

The design of software and the design of work are still too often thought of as distinct domains of activity and expertise. Add to this the apparently equally distinct domains of industrial relations and training, and scholars and practitioners are faced with even more challenging questions that continue to elude most design, implementation and change efforts. A variety of approaches provide tools to understand the complexity of the situation, but rarely address issues related to either industrial relations and social learning systems. While it is not typically the role of designers to take these matters into account, critical awareness of these matters may have important value.

In this talk, Peter Sawchuk will address current research on work design, training and industrial relations with an eye toward building critical awareness in the design community. He will draw on international examples, and will make preliminary observations from ongoing research on the impact of Service Model Delivery Technology and welfare work change in Ontario.

**Presentations are on the last Tuesday of the month at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel,
123 Queen Street West, across from New City Hall**

If taking the subway, exit at Osgoode station (Queen and University), walk one block east along Queen to York.
If driving, you can park at New City Hall, which is accessible underground to the Sheraton Centre.

Dinner and Presentation: \$35 Members, \$50 Non-Members
Cash and Cheques are accepted at the door.

Please RSVP by noon on Thursday January 20, 2005

5:30 P.M. Networking 6:00 P.M. Dinner 7:00 - 8:30 P.M. Presentation

**For reservations, information and membership inquiries,
visit our web site at www.tassq.org or phone TASSQ at (416) 444-4168**