What is work practice research?

• Work practice technology research is all about understanding how people work (and play);
  - How they communicate, interact with technologies and artefacts
  - We inspire innovation!
• Work practice studies (WPS) are the disciplined, detailed study of the organisation of work:
  - Ethnographic investigations, inductive analysis and iterative design
Automating processes or augmenting human expertise

• Automation is the technologists mantra, but
• The solution? Design technologies to augment human expertise
• With WPS uncover the human expertise in even mundane, low skilled work
• Help us to understand where automation is the answer, but crucially how to innovate to capitalise on human expertise

Large scale data processing

Three I’s: interpretation, improvisation and interaction

vs.

Page 3
Work practice research: Innovating for experts

From call centres…
In customer care, virtual services are cheaper, per interaction
Simplistic analysis might be to remove humans from loop

Work practice study of a troubleshooting call centre found:

- Troubleshooters add value by negotiating the expertise gap and persuading customer to troubleshoot
- But barrier is it’s a sequential, spatial activity, but only communication channel is phone

Solution: Virtual helpdesk
Work practice research: Innovating for experts

…to legal analysis
Innovation to empower the people you are paying

…to schools
Innovation to make the necessary administration easier to enable people to get on with the ‘real work’

…to emerging markets
Innovation to overcome the challenges of extremes of education, experience and wealth, plus limited infrastructure

WPS inspire innovation by revealing peoples ‘everyday’ expertise