Workshop on The Ethnography of Documents
Tuesday, May 28th, 2:30-5:30 pm
Ofek Room, DISI

The experiential learning methods of ethnography have become increasingly attractive to people working with digital technologies. Ethnography, as a way to spark ideas about how people might use technology, has for some time now been acknowledged to be important to the design moment in IT development. The value of ethnography as a basis for a deeper and longer engagement with people is also increasingly recognized.

Working with written records and other documents is another type of ethnographic work whose recognition is growing. This developing field combines the openness of "hanging out," long seen as an advantage of the ethnographic imagination, with recognition of documents can be active agents. This recognition is allied with a number of developments, in fields as diverse as Science and Technology Studies and Cultural Studies, that can be captured in the phrase, techno-materiality.

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce participants to the intellectual benefits of taking an ethnographic approach to the study of documents. Participants are asked to read a number of papers from the field, available at: They should also identify one or two sorts of documents that they are now or intend in the future to work with, so that these can be considered from an ethnography of documents perspective.

Workshop facilitators:
        Dr. Kalpana Shankar, Lecturer and Information Studies Scholar, School of Information and Library Studies, University College, Dublin, Ireland
        Dr. David Hakken, Information Ethnographer, Director of the Social Informatics Program, School if Informatics and Computing, Indiana University-Bloomington, USA, and University Fellow, University of Trento

Participation in the workshop is free but limited to 25 people. Please sign up by sending an email to: dhakken@indiana.edu
Preparatory readings for the workshop are available at:
http://disi.unitn.it/~dandrea/workshop/