THE END


http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/acadswriting/
Why talk about space and time in relation to the digital university?

• Maintenance and development of the university physical estate is an important though often invisible strand of management
• Time is scheduled and contracted
• Digital technologies are integral to these design decisions.
• There are different perspectives on space and time: students/ academics/ administrators.
• Physical and digital infrastructures have implications for academic writing work
personalised spaces

- Academics have strong preferences about conditions under which they can write and work creatively
- Issues of privacy and interruption
What are the effects of digital technologies on the timespace of academic writing?

1 refurbishment and reorganization of space
2 swopping the library for the screen, the pen for the keyboard
3 mobilities and the fuzzy spaces in-between

“Monday morning I will think a bit more carefully about the flow of things I am going to say and how I will explain some things. I will often do that on the way in. When I am travelling or walking on the street. It is kind of loading it up into so that when I am actually in the lecture I have been thinking about it and it flows hopefully.”

Will Dodd, Maths
4 writing in multiple overlaid times and spaces

Get up, check email
Read a paper over breakfast
Email comes in – Urgent!! – panel report
Check Moodle site
Post on Facebook
Tweet
Read and write book reviews
5 standardised formats and timeframes

- Synchronised deadlines
- Reporting templates
- Shared writing
- Data chains
what strategies and choices do academic writers develop for managing these effects?

“Yes, I really need the zone and me, nothing else going on. We’ve got a little dog at home and if I’m doing a certain sort of writing I won’t even work at home. I’m better off actually in the library, so people here in the office can’t disturb me and knock on my door. People can’t get me by phone because I can switch my phone off. The dog can’t bark. Every time a postman goes or something, the dog barks and it really breaks my thought and sometimes it doesn’t come back. I used to use those pods; do you know by Building X? I think they’ve fallen into disrepair.”

Diane Simmonds, Marketing, Uni A
Collin Whitworth, History, “I do an awful lot of writing at home. I think I am a cause of some despair, probably, at home because I do work very long hours, and often. I mean, as in very often, I'm working into the late evening. [...] 8:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:00pm at night. And it might be because I've got inspiration to do something, as it were, of my own, or it might be because there's a deadline, a student needs a reference, or a document for teaching needs to be updated. And it's easier to do that at work at 9:00pm than to feel I will have time in the working day, when I might, but I might be interrupted”
Politics professor, pilot project  Uni A

I have a laptop a rather rickety old IBM .....  
...I have a separate machine at home that I run the internet on but I keep my laptop as a walled garden, never goes onto the internet, never leaves the house actually. It just sits there, I transfer stuff on a data stick between my computer and the one downstairs if I’m going to e-mail it to somebody but apart from that I don’t do anything else with it ....

Charles Cooper (Marketing): It is almost like a physical, it’s not a mental thing but it’s a physical no, I will put my phone away in my drawer. I’ve got one friend who actually moves it, when he’s away on holiday or in the evenings, he moves it to the second page so he just doesn’t get stressed.
conclusions

• Changes in the academic workplace create pressures and tensions that have to be managed.

• Academics set boundaries in space and time to protect highly-valued knowledge-creation work but these are fragile and constantly breached.

• Spaces need to be designed to meet academics' needs as well as students.