Hybrid Studies: Of Work, Talk, and Technology

(New Developments in Ethnomethodology 2026)

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Organizers:

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Abstract:

The *New Developments in Ethnomethodology* 2026 meeting aims to revisit, discuss, and advance "hybrid studies" (Garfinkel 2002) that probe the nexus of work, talk, and technology. More broadly, the meeting may engage with "practical or applied research" that is "done by outsiders who are also insiders" (Rawls 2002: 40), be it current ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (EM/CA) or related fields (e.g., media studies, human–computer interaction, science and technology studies). Keeping hybridity at the centre of discussion, we encourage and welcome contributions from researchers across EM/CA and related fields who are interested and involved in studies of practical action and practical reasoning in "naturally organized ordinary activities," "studies of work" and "the workplace," studies of "talk-in-interaction," and their relationships, and/or their contribution(s) to the development, testing, deployment, or critique of communicative and other technologies.

Although the term "hybrid studies" might be associated with Garfinkel's later publications, EM has arguably always been internally related to diverse fields and other disciplines, drawing on them for its phenomena and descriptive adequacy (see, e.g., Ikeya 2025). As suggested by materials in the Harold Garfinkel Archive (Newburyport, MA, USA), Garfinkel's interest in "specifying the disciplines as praxis" was formulated in the early 1970s, when he got involved in a preliminary inquiry into chemistry lecturing with David Sudnow as part of a broader project on academic disciplines with Edward Rose (see Mlynář 2023), while the practice-based approach to the workplace was already in the focus of Garfinkel's (1942 [2019]) early study of the Aircraft Mechanics School at Gulfport Field. More recently, notions of hybridity have been discussed in relation to a number of practical fields, spanning information science (Ikeya & Sharrock 2008), computational technology (Crabtree 2004; Rooke & Seymour 2005), taiji, ballet, and yoga (Eisenmann & Mitchell 2023, 2024), artificial intelligence (Ivarsson 2023; Saha et al. 2024), law (Burns 2000); physics (Sormani 2016), and mathematics (Livingston 1999; Greiffenhagen & Sharrock 2019). Concurrently, and somewhat independently (but see Maynard & Clayman 2018), there is an orientation in CA toward practical applications of its findings (Antaki 2011).

By their nature, such endeavours are fundamentally domain-specific and only rarely brought together to invite reflections on possibly shared topics – such as "collaborating with practitioners," "trans-" or "inter-disciplinarity," "tradition and innovation" in science and technology, if not beyond. In other words, "hybrid studies," as they remain to be worked out each time anew (hence the scare quotes), invite discussions on the status of EM/CA as (a) discipline(s) (cf. Maynard & Clayman 1991; Sormani 2019; Jenkings 2023), and their relation,

critique, or indifference to sociology (Button et al. 2022; Carlin 2025), linguistics (Schegloff 1990; Fox et al. 2012), and/or other "home" disciplines (Lynch 2022).

The meeting invites and welcomes contributions that address questions such as (but not limited to):

- What has happened to the idea of "hybrid studies" and how is it currently being used?
- Should EM be maintained as a distinct domain in hybrid study configurations? What does it mean?
- How is CA related to hybrid studies?
- How are hybrid studies connected to other central EM themes such as "the unique adequacy requirement of methods", "tutorial problems", or "respecification"?
- Has the relationship between EM and sociology been "hybrid" all along (cf. Pollner 2012)?
- How can the notion of "technomethodology" (Dourish & Button 1998) be further developed?
- What are some challenges and prospects of "learning from practitioners" already engaged in ongoing activities? And how does it relate to other methodological developments, e.g., in ethnography (Eisenmann & Mitchell 2024), participatory design studies, etc.?
- "Where to start? With what? Taking what as an issue? With whose prior authorship? In what detail? What's first? What to do next? What will we find ourselves to have landed in the midst of? With what actual lived work will we busy ourselves? With just what is at hand?" (Garfinkel 2007: 53)

We invite researchers interested in presenting their work to submit a title and an abstract of approximately **300 words (excluding references) by 12 January 2026 to jakub.mlynar@hevs.ch.** Notification regarding the inclusion of your contribution in the programme will be provided at the beginning of February.

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