"This is really interesting. I never even thought about this ."
Methodological strategies for studying invisible information work

Pamela J. McKenzie

The University of Western Ontario, London, ON

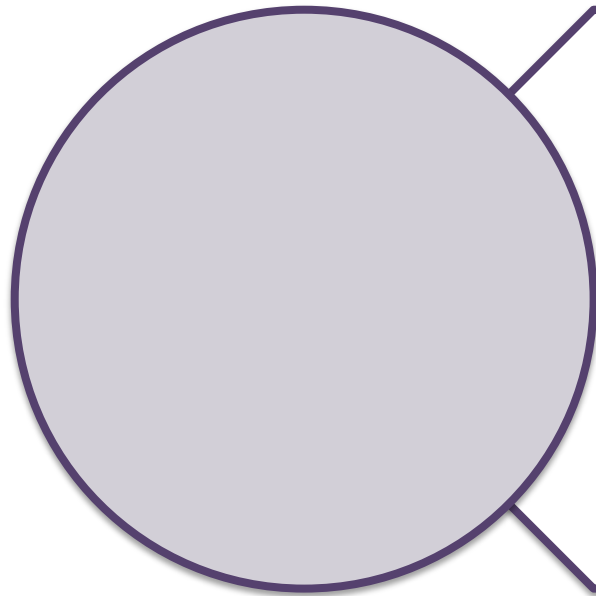Nicole K. Dalmer | @ndalmer

Trent University, Peterborough, ON

Western FIMS
Faculty of Information & Media Studies

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

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Graphic from Episode 6 of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* TV series reproduced at https://hitchhikers.fandom.com/wiki/Golgafrinchans

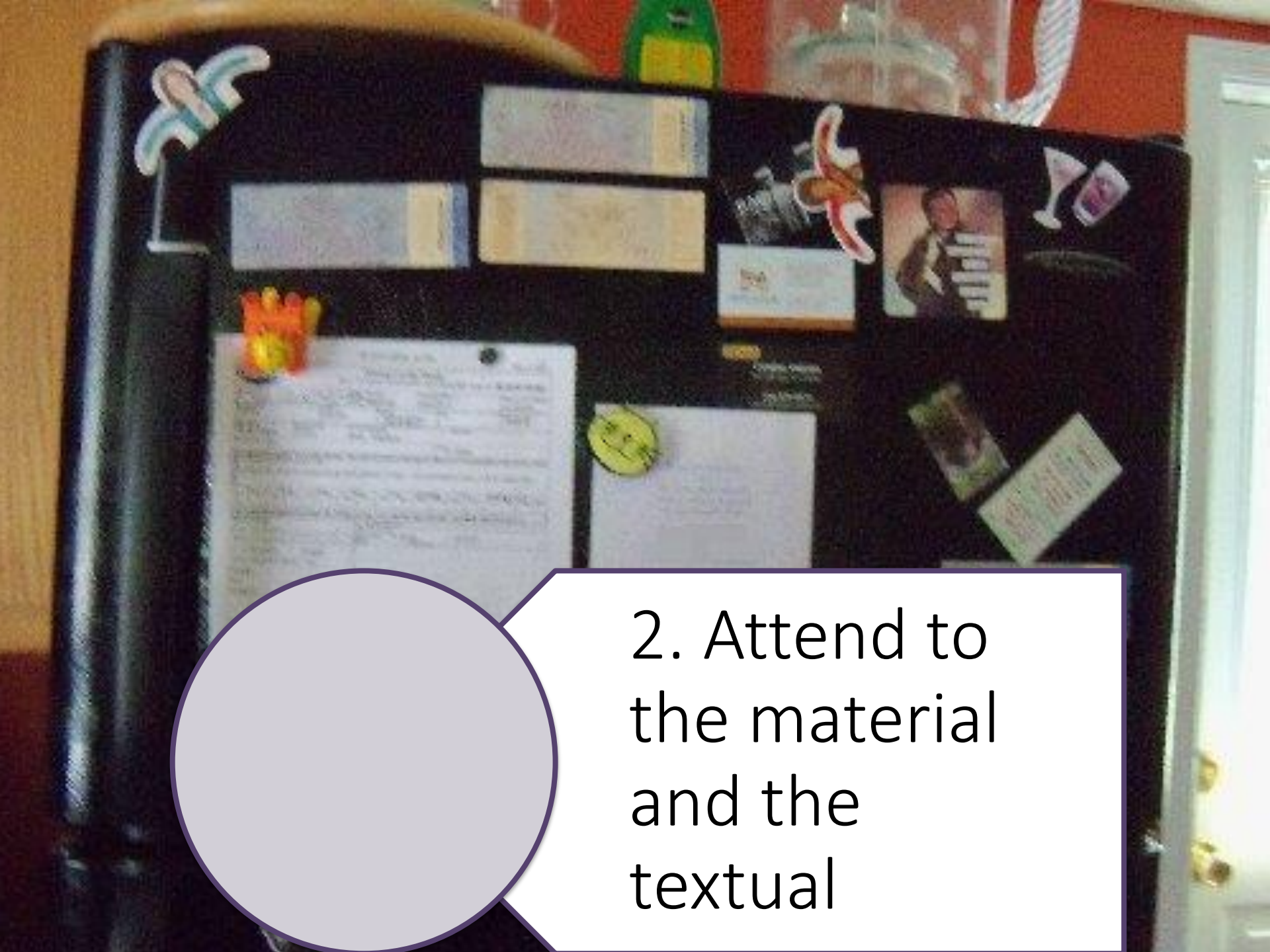# Work …

- "the ongoing concerting and coordinating of individuals' activities" (Smith, 1999, p. 7)
- Many lines of work:
  - information work (Corbin & Strauss, 1985)
  - adherence work (Senteio & Veinot, 2014)
  - knowledge work (Newell, 2015)
  - document work (Trace, 2007)
  - literacy work and caring work (Stooke & McKenzie, 2009).
  - articulation work (Star, 1991)

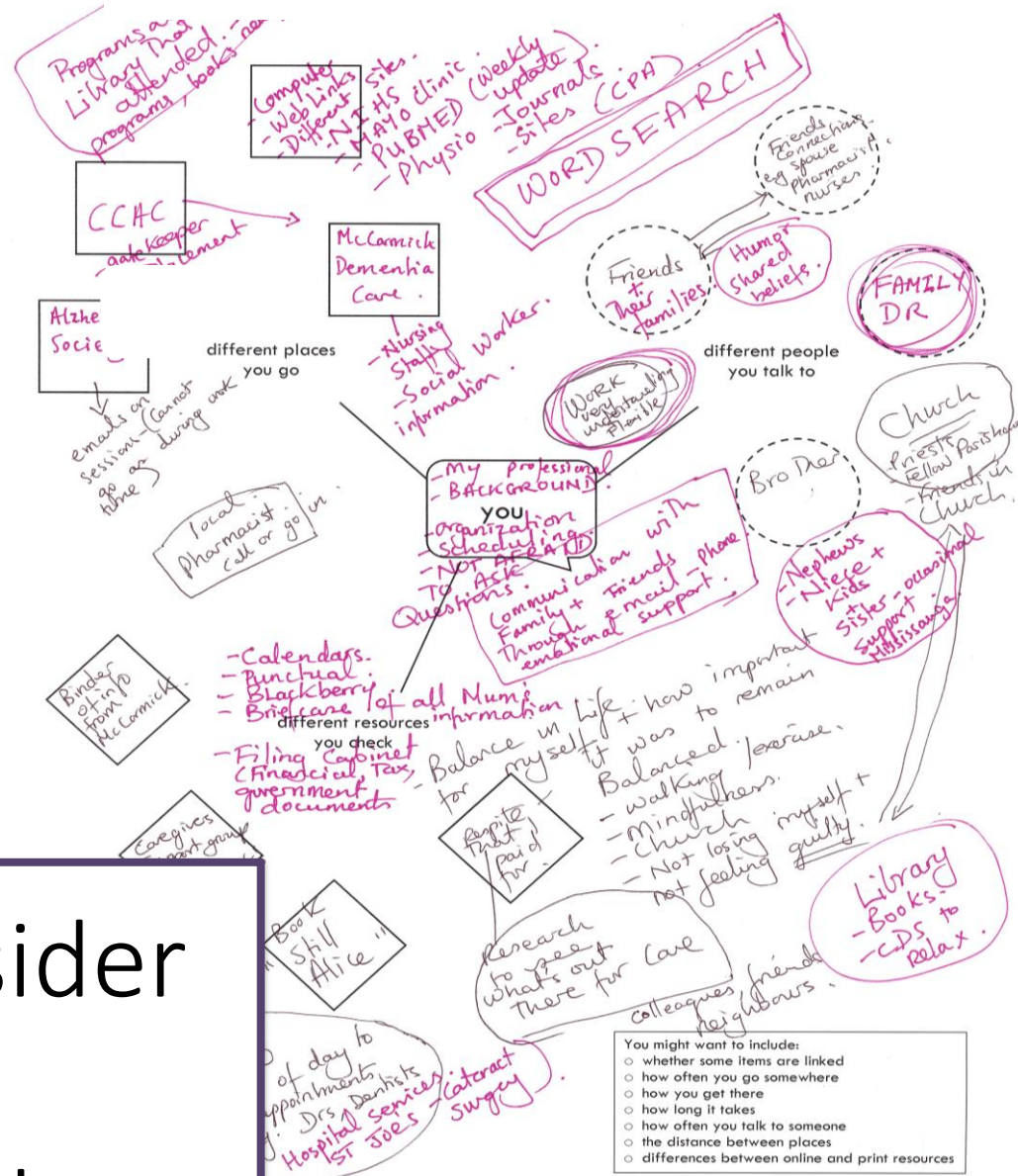# 4 methodological reflections on studying the invisible

1. Consider the local and the translocal

2. Attend to the material and the textual

Harriet's Information World

3. Consider visual methods

4. Reconsider the participant's role and expertise

4 categories of invisible work

1. work done in invisible places
2. work defined as routine or manual
3. work done by invisible people
4. informal work processes that are not part of any job description but which are crucial to the functioning of the workplace

Nardi & Engeström, 1999

Questions?

- Pam McKenzie: pmckenzi@uwo.ca

  @pamnevertweets

- Nicole Dalmer: nicoledalmer@trentu.ca

  @ndalmer

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