Abstract: Organisational tensions play a critical role in virtual (geographically distributed, technology-mediated) collaboration. Rather than treating them as negative and anomalous, I adopt a theoretical framework of dialectical tensions as normal, ubiquitous features of organising that can be productive in enabling distributed workers to attend to multiple, competing goals. This talk presents findings from two qualitative studies that examine dialectical tensions arising in the technology use (including a range of tools from email to social media) of distributed workers that help them both engage and disengage from others and share knowledge while managing their time, attention, and workload. The ways in which they draw on various technological affordances to respond to these tensions, and the ways in which these responses enable organising processes by maintaining flexibility and balance among opposing goals, will be discussed.

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Gibbs is Associate Professor in the School of Communication and Information (SC&I) at Rutgers University and Director of the Masters of Communication and Information Studies (MCIS) program. She earned her Ph.D. from the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Southern California in 2002. Her research focuses on collaboration and knowledge sharing in virtual, multicultural work contexts such as globally distributed teams as well as the use of new communication technologies for online self-presentation and relationship formation. Her research has been published in major communication and management journals such as Administrative Science Quarterly, Communication Research, Human Relations, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Journal of Social & Personal Relationships, and Organization Science.

Date: Friday 10 May 2013
Time: 12:00-1:00pm followed by Sandwich Reception
Venue: BUSN 142 Case Study Room
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