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ABSTRACT BOOK

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Science and Technology

Scientific collaboration within and across research teams

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This paper presents part of the results achieved to date in the process of developing a collaboratory in two R&D organizations. A collaboratory corresponds to a laboratory without walls, in which scientists are connected to each other, to scientific instruments and to information, independently of time and location. These two cases are part of a broader research project engaged in building a collaboratory in order to share knowledge and resources among the Portuguese State Laboratories. The building of the collaboratory is anchored on three main tasks: a) information audits carried out in each of the organizations, in order to map the main information flows, entities, repositories and systems; b) information behaviour research, in order to gain insight into the organizational information culture and the researchers' information use; c) implementation of the appropriate infrastructure and tools, in order to accommodate information archiving and intelligent search, collaborative software, remote control of scientific instruments, and multi-channel access to the services.

The case study strategy was adopted because it is particularly amenable to the triangulation of methods (namely document analysis, survey and interviewing) thus providing rich ingredients to characterize a specific context. Discourse analysis was the technique used to analyse the interview transcripts. The research sites are two government R&D institutions operating in the Civil Engineering and in the Nuclear Technology fields, respectively.

In the process of preparing the ground to develop the collaboratory, interviews were carried out with researchers of those two organizations in order to understand what collaboration means for them, and how collaboration actually happens within specific research project teams, and on their organizational daily routine. Attention was also paid to the socio-professional networks of these researchers, in order to understand the role played by these networks in their lives. This paper focuses on the interpretative repertoires emerging in the course of the interviewing process. We expect that our understanding of the researchers' collaboration framework and the meaning they assign to it may help us shape the collaboratory.