Can practice theory inspire studies of ICTs in everyday life?

In recent years, rich countries have witnessed a proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in everyday life. ICT equipment is thus one of the fastest growing categories of consumer goods. The widespread adoption of ICT equipment can be seen as an element in constructing a new ‘normality’ in everyday life: the expectations and conventions regarding a normal home’s necessary ‘infrastructure’ and the ordinary gear for a normal way of life are changing, and the changes are proceeding rapidly. This chapter takes a closer look at the construction of a new normality in everyday life and discusses how this development can be studied from the perspective of practice theory. We show how a practice theory approach shifts the analytic focus away from the consumption of ICT as such and toward the practices that integrate ICT as one element among many others. Thereby, a practice theory approach helps us to avoid the risk of ending up with a ‘media-centric’ understanding of the use of new media and adds interesting details and subtleties to the study of the construction of a new normality in everyday life. Our application of practice theory in the study of the normalisation process shows how ICTs have become integrated into a wide range of practices of everyday life and thus may contribute to the increasing ‘materialisation’ of everyday practices. Finally, our attempts to apply practice theory in empirical studies reveal some theoretical and methodological issues that need more consideration, including how social interaction may contribute to change and problems concerning how to delimit practices.