

Seeing Each Other at Work

Speculative Artifacts and Exegesis for Algorithmic Visibility

Abstract

Algorithmic systems embedded in everyday collaboration platforms increasingly shape the way workers form impressions about each other. As they infer, evaluate, and act upon workers' traces, professional visibility becomes entangled with surveillance, recognition, and new forms of agency and reappropriation. This pictorial examines how such entanglements are materialized and negotiated when algorithmic systems and AI agents enter workplace visibility practices. We present a set of speculative artifacts situated within a shared regime of algorithmic workplace visibility, including organizational performance dashboards, predictive interfaces, Agentic AI, third-party optimization tools, and critical reactions around such socio-technical constellations. The pictorial pairs these artifacts with marginal annotations that operate as exegesis—critical, analytical, or elaborative commentary—positioning and interpreting the situated material work of design in relation to critical HCI scholarship. Our contribution lies in the insights about algorithmic visibility made possible through the indexical ties between speculative artifacts and exegetic annotation.

Authors Keywords

Visibility; Impression; Future of Work; Speculative Design; Annotations.

CSS Concepts

•Human-centered computing~Interaction design

•Human-centered computing~Human computer interaction (HCI)~HCI theory, concepts and models



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1. Introduction

Collaboration technologies such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack have become the primary stage where remote workers communicate and perform their responsibilities [41]. Beyond supporting shared digital workspaces for communication and coordination among distributed teams, collaboration platforms heighten visibility by broadcasting progress, signaling availability, and making interactions more observable [19,27]. This makes many knowledge workers worry about professional invisibility, potentially limiting recognition and advancement opportunities [43] and leads to a variety of situated practices through which visibility is negotiated under the constraints of audio-visual collaboration technologies.

Professional visibility is not merely an individual strategy or a strategic use of technology but a phenomenon actively co-constructed through relations between human and non-human actors within socio-material configurations [38]. The rollout of AI-driven visibility systems is accelerating in everyday workplace platforms. AI now infers and judges workers' cognitive and affective states—such as attentiveness, mood, or stress—deepening the intrusiveness of being seen at work [3,44]. These inferences are processed by opaque, algorithmic systems that classify, rank, and steer conduct, effectively embedding managerial authority into technical infrastructures [22,26,30].

Foundational CSCW research by Star and Strauss establishes that navigating the “ecology of visible and invisible work” is a double-edged sword [45]: making

hidden labor visible can yield crucial recognition, yet, forcing nuanced human effort into formal socio-technical systems risks reducing it to “abstract indicators,” stripping away context and inviting mindless quantification of labor. While scholarship on algorithmic management has foregrounded surveillance, control, and performance evaluation, CSCW and HCI research has also consistently shown that visibility of one's contributions is central to recognition, legitimacy, and a sense of value at work [49] emphasizing the potential of socio-technical systems in making latent activities visible as a resource for empowerment, coordination, and recognition rather than control.

We see a fundamental paradox here: workers must maintain visibility to demonstrate contribution and gain recognition, yet visibility simultaneously exposes them to surveillance. Hafermalz [27] describes a fear of “exile” that motivates workers to voluntarily expose themselves to surveillance infrastructures in order to remain visible. Therefore professional visibility, surveillance, and recognition are highly entangled.

With algorithmic visibility operating across interfaces, infrastructures, organizational logics, and informal practices, dynamics such as subversion, reappropriation, empowerment or delegation are situated in socio-material configurations and hard to isolate analytically and disentangle. There is a need for approaches to materialize such entanglements within everyday collaboration scenarios. Such approaches account for situation,

materiality, and relations rather than analytical approaches that require isolating the problem space into discrete domains.

HCI researchers have widely used speculative approaches often for critical exploration, cultural reflection, and facilitation of debate around socio-ethical implications of technology [4,50,58]. In this tradition, artifacts can encapsulate certain framings around emerging socio-technical systems [5,31]. As Candy and Dunagan [14] argue, the materiality of artifacts goes beyond “safe analytic distance” and helps “exploit the continuum of human experience in order to enable a different and deeper engagement”.

To this end, this pictorial presents a set of speculative artifacts situated within a shared fictional regime of algorithmic workplace visibility. Rather than proposing future systems or evaluating existing technologies, the artifacts are used to examine how workplace visibility is reorganized when algorithmic systems and AI agents enter practices and processes of surveillance, evaluation, prediction, and representation.

2. Hāshiyeh As Marginal Annotations

Speculative artifacts are often encountered as standalone objects—circulating through exhibitions, portfolios, or design fictions—where their critical potential rests primarily on provocation or open-ended interpretation. While such artifacts can effectively surface questions and tensions, their contribution to research knowledge remains ambiguous when they are left to speak for themselves [10,37].

Drawing on traditions of creative practice research, this pictorial treats speculative artifacts as sites of inquiry where epistemic value emerges through accompanying

exegesis [11].

In line with accounts of “annotated portfolios” [9,37], we organized annotations to position and interpret artifacts in relation to broader theoretical and socio-technical concerns. In this arrangement, knowledge is actively produced through this “mutual informing” between speculative artifacts and marginal annotations, rather

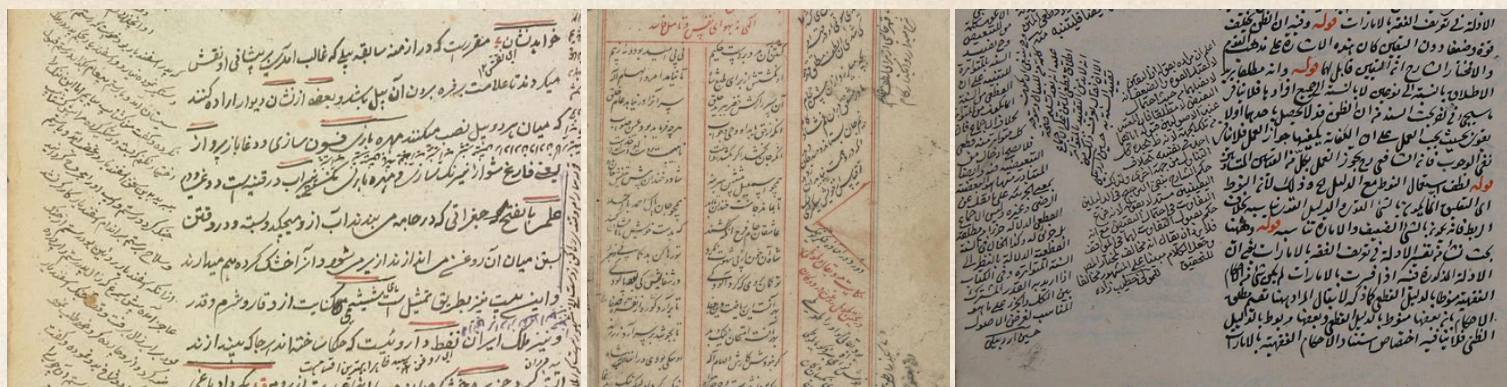


Figure 1: Right: Multi-layer Hāshiyeh in Arabic, Left: Persian Interpretive Hāshiyeh. Middle: Hāshiyeh for organizing parallel separate content simultaneously. We acknowledge that angular organization of Hāshiyeh decrease the ease of readability. However, this has been an intention for inviting the reader to adapt diverse reading pace between the canon and marginal exegesis.

than residing in either alone [9]. Artifacts present distinct configurations of algorithmic workplace visibility, while marginal annotations function as exegesis that situates and interprets them.

Our exegetic marginal annotations draw on ḥāshiyah, an Islamic intellectual tradition (often in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu) that extends beyond marginal glosses to function as a discursive space for citation, clarification, independent reasoning, and long-term scholarly exchange [57]. Figure 1 shows examples of such marginal exegesis. We particularly adapt the aesthetics of ḥāshiyah, where canonical exegesis is placed as marginal commentary on the side of the main text.

This format invites a slower, non-linear mode of reading in which interpretation develops through movement between artifact and marginal annotations. While the ḥāshiyah tradition diverges from modern writing structures, it orchestrates a slower reading pace and deep engagement. Crucially for HCI, this approach enables a sustained movement between material entanglement and analytical disentanglement. The artifacts stage situations in which

multiple dynamics—visibility, surveillance, delegation, and resistance—coexist, while the annotation allows these dynamics to be temporarily isolated, examined, and re-related.

Across our artifacts, dynamics of invisibility, surveillance, recognition, delegation, subversion, and empowerment are examined as entangled practices that surface through different configurations of algorithmic workplace visibility. By materializing these entanglements through design, the pictorial aims to make the logics and tensions of algorithmic visibility legible in ways that abstract, reductionist analytical approaches alone often cannot.

All the decorative illustrations used in the pictorial are adapted from NaarDoon Open Library of Persian Visual Elements. These illustrations were often used in manuscripts with extensive marginal annotations and diagonal texts. We use them in this pictorial both thematically and as ornamental visual elements primarily to compensate for the triangular negative spaces that the marginal annotations cause in the layout.

3. Visibility, Recognition, and Surveillance

To understand how workers manage professional visibility and their impressions, Goffman's dramaturgical lens has the most theoretical relevance. He conceptualizes people as performers on various metaphorical "stages" performing a character and elaborates that individuals regulate different aspects of their self-identities based on relationship with the audience and sociocultural settings [12,21]. While Goffman's theory is about everyday life, it can be easily applied to the context of everyday work [17]. Workers constantly try to shape others' perceptions of themselves [1,8] by regulating the extent to which their presence and identities are apparent to co-workers and supervisors [7,26,31,43].

Hochschild [27] draws on Goffman's theories to explain the dramaturgical demands of the "frontstage" in the context of service-sector jobs. Her notion of "emotional labor" highlights relational work whereby people express and suppress their emotions in order to sustain a favorable image for others. The metaphorical "stage" is now a digital one as workers curate how they appear through online channels.

Wayne and Ferris [47] categorize workers' visibility practices into three orientations: when interacting with managers towards "gaining favor", when focusing on themselves towards "friendliness and positivity", and when channelizing through their work centering around "productivity, continuous learning, and self-promotion". More specifically looking at computer-mediated practices, Blunden and Brodsky [6] distinguish between verbal, nonverbal, meta behaviors in visibility and impression management practices of workers. Verbal behaviors hinge on word choice and phrasing, such as self-disclosure, greetings, or linguistic mimicry; Nonverbal behaviors involve cues beyond words, including emoticons,

punctuation, typos, vocal tone, or eye contact in video calls; And meta-behaviors stem from the affordances of digital media, like how quickly one replies, the time of day messages are sent, whether others are CC'd, or the aesthetics of virtual backgrounds.

Extending these categorizations in explicitly organizational terms, Mehrvarz et al. [36], conceptualizes

speaking, presenting, or signaling engagement in online meetings), artifact-based visibility (e.g., leaving traceable contributions through documents, code repositories, etc.), and reappropriation-based visibility (e.g., gaming availability indicators, response timing, or metadata). Crucially, they argue that these practices are shaped by and feed back into organizational power dynamics and managerial attention, producing psycho-social externalities such as fear of job loss, mistrust, and pressures toward performative behavior. Visibility, in this account, is contingent on recognition by others and mediated by technological affordances, rather than solely controllable by workers themselves.

In practice, algorithmic work systems range from so-called bossware [38] that monitors interaction and device activity to HR analytics that score candidates on video and audio signals [16,40] to informal algorithmic-mediated interactions such as writing-suggestions in Instant Messaging applications.

With the increasing proliferation of algorithmic systems in everyday work, Industry offerings such as Microsoft Viva Engage or "People Skills," [37] which infers employees' competencies from their digital activity on every single Microsoft 365 app (Teams, Word, Excel, Co-pilot, etc.), illustrate how easily visibility, recognition and performance evaluation can be fallen into routine collaboration technologies (see figure 2).

This trajectory—from Taylor's stopwatch [28] contemporary algorithmic systems—represents a qualitative shift in workplace control and informal practices. Collaboration technologies now act as "stochastic witnesses" [22], continuously generating probabilistic assessments of workers through opaque procedures without direct human accountability.

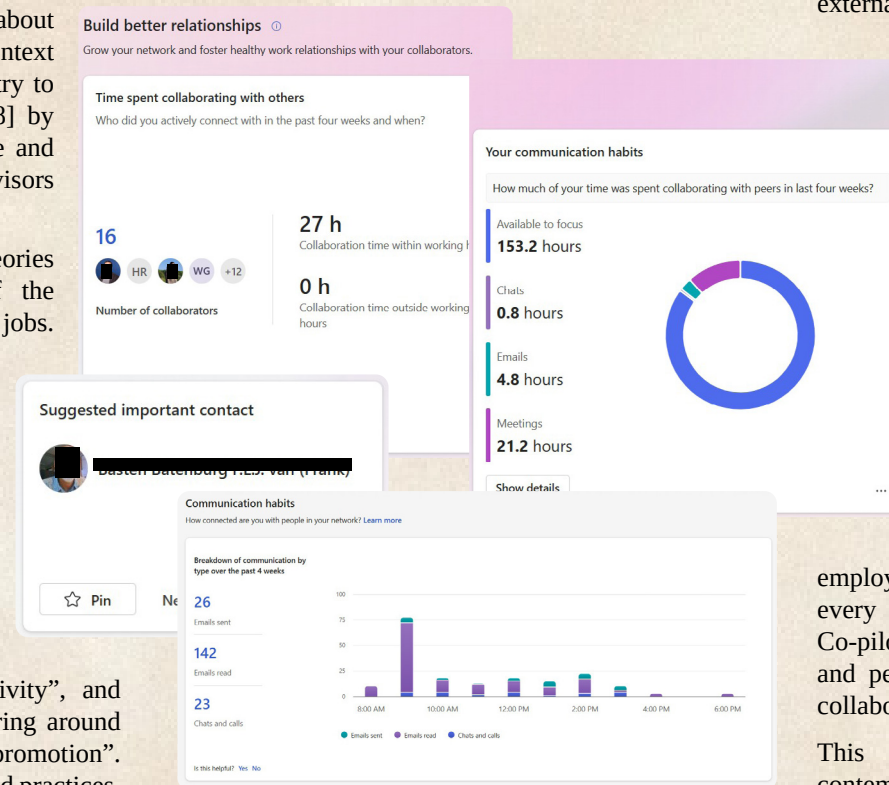


Figure 2: Snapshots from Microsoft "Viva Engage" from a real EU-based company. "Build better relationships" infers communication log to suggest new contact for workers.

workplace visibility within three recurrent socio-material configurations: meeting-based visibility (e.g.,

4. Artifact Ecology: Algorithmic Actors in Workplace Visibility

Rather than forming a single system or narrative, the artifacts articulate different algorithmic actors that participate in how visibility, recognition, and evaluation are produced at work. Together, these artifacts sketch a speculative ecology in which workplace visibility is shaped through a constellation of organizational infrastructures with workers’ practices through as third-party optimization services, and also critical responses to the status quo. We brought artifacts—each foregrounding a distinct position within this speculative ecology—as synopsis of an algorithmic visibility regime which highlights how algorithmic visibility is enacted, anticipated, delegated, contested, or refused.

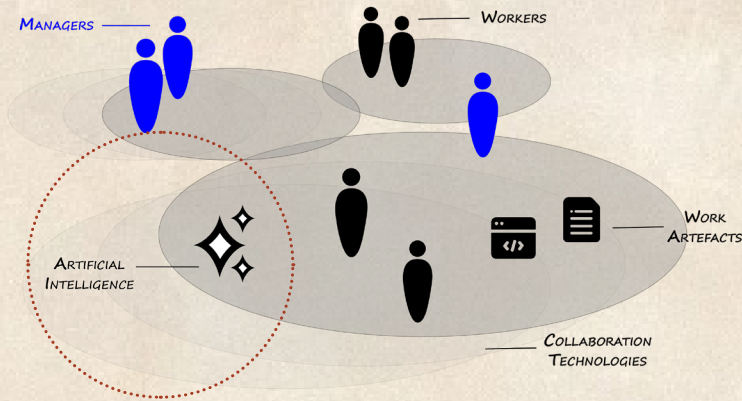


Figure 3: Mehrvarz et al. [38] framed “visibility ecosystem” where multiple socio-material configurations of workers, managers, tools, work artifacts construct professional visibility. We extended this by adding AI as a new entity to this ecosystem and situating our artifacts within such it.

At the organizational level, **NOCITPONAP** (figure 4) operates as a customized corporate visibility infrastructure that formalizes evaluation through metrics, rankings, and dashboards. An associated **AI Agent Delegation** interface (figure 5) presents an interaction moment through which aspects of visibility work—such as participation, responsiveness, or decision-making—to be partially delegated to

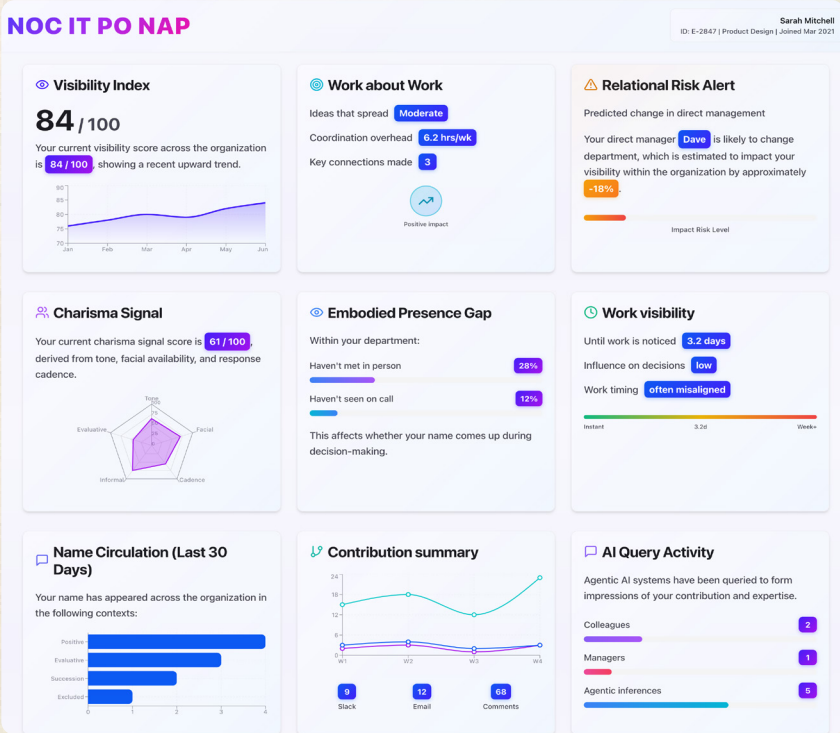


Figure 4: NOCITPONAP represents a corporate approach to empowering workers’ visibility

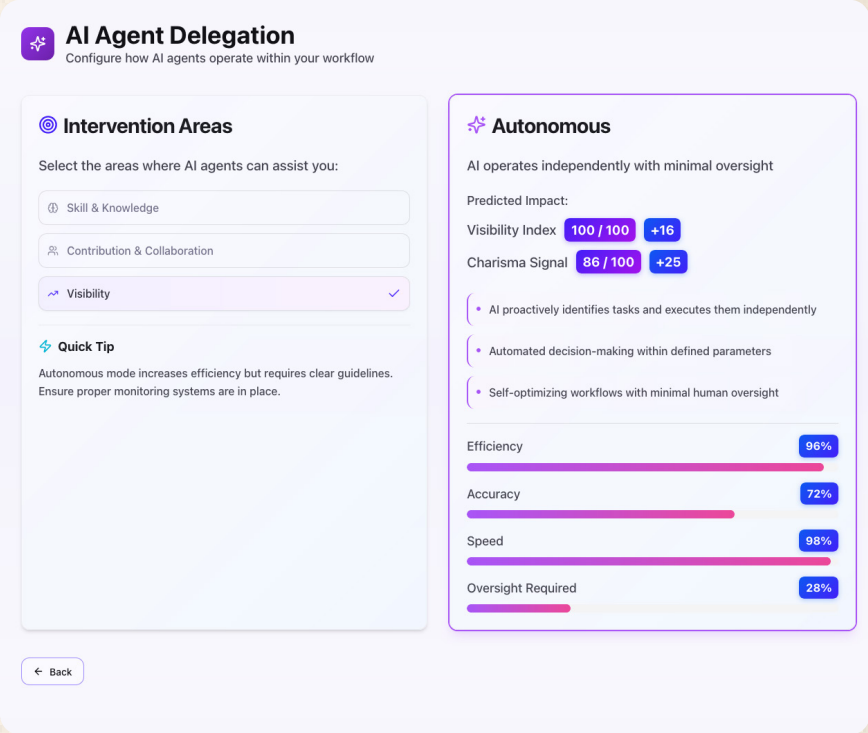


Figure 5: AI Agent Delegation is a corporate AI solution for empowering workers’ visibility.

AI agents, redistributing responsibility and agency within the same evaluative regime.

At the level of individual adaptation, third-party services such as **Impression Checker** (figure 7) and **BetterYou** (figure 6) operate alongside official platforms. These tools anticipate how workers will be perceived by algorithmic and human audiences, offering real-time guidance, data footprint manipulation, and optimization of presence and appearance. Positioned outside organizational control, they exploit existing visibility infrastructures while remaining parasitic to them.

Finally, practices grouped under **Hashtag Invisible Labor** (figure 8) foreground forms of refusal, reappropriation, and counter-visibility. These artifacts highlight work that remains illegible to dominant metrics, as well as critical collective efforts to reclaim recognition outside algorithmic capture.

The development of this speculative ecology was an iterative design process led primarily by the first author, with conceptual refinement driven by ongoing critical dialogue among the broader research team. Our approach of presenting an ecology of artifacts, rather than a single isolated design, builds upon established speculative methodologies in HCI. As Coulton et al. [18] argue, designing an interrelated set of artifacts acts as a form of ‘world building,’ giving the speculative environment greater depth and verisimilitude. Furthermore, this ecological approach aligns with Wong et al.’s [54] concept of ‘infrastructural speculations,’ shifting the analytical focus from individual devices to the broader organizational and political ‘lifeworld’ they inhabit. Notably, this process also embraced non-human collaboration and existing academic community explorations as generative sites. For instance, the conceptualization and interface development of the NOCITPONAP dashboard were partially co-speculated in dialogue with an AI coding agent (Claude code), mirroring the

very human-AI entanglements the artifact seeks to critique. Furthermore, the exploration of algorithmic delegation—materialized in artifacts such as the organizational AI Delegation Interface and BetterYou—draws some conceptual inspiration from speculative design work conducted in a recent master’s thesis titled “Is This the

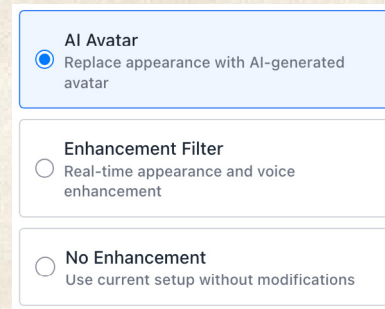


Figure 6 : **BetterYou** is a third-party webcam support for workers enabled by algorithmic systems.

Me They Want?” [21]. Together, these diverse conceptual origins underscore the artifacts not as isolated objects, but as syntheses of ongoing technical, collaborative, and critical conversations.

Read together, the artifacts do not propose a future workplace or a coherent solution. Instead, they delineate an ecology of algorithmic actors whose interactions produce the conditions under which workplace visibility is experienced, negotiated, and contested.



Figure 7: **Impression Checker** is a third-party gadget to support online meeting presence.

Just a little note to celebrate that I spent my afternoon quietly polishing a colleague’s draft report. They won’t know I did it, but hey, the document’s a little shinier and that’s my invisible win for the day.
[#QuietWork](#)

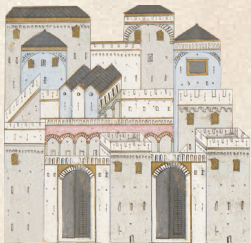


Figure 8: **Hashtag_invisibl_t_labor** is a fictional social media trend.

4.1. NOCITPONAP

NOCITPONAP is a fictional corporate service that aggregates traces of organization-wide activity—such as production outputs, meeting participation, platform engagement, mentions, and relational interactions—into a continuous organizational record of worker visibility. The system presents

this record through dashboards, indices, and alerts that quantify how visible individuals are across teams and departments. Framed as neutral feedback, NOCITPONAP positions visibility as a measurable attribute that workers can monitor, compare, and potentially improve over time.



1. NOCITPONAP's **Visibility Index** and **Charisma Signal** function as an “stochastic machine witnesses” [25] inferring evaluative judgments from aggregated traces rather than direct observation. Visibility is no longer something managers or peers witness, but something machines compute through opaque, black-boxed probabilistic processes. Recognition thus shifts from accountable judgment to inferred credibility of systems whose internal logic cannot be inspected or contested. See (14) for “corrected performance”.

2. Prior work has framed data-driven collaboration systems as ways of surfacing work that would otherwise remain invisible. Kow and Cheng [33], for example, describe a voluntary peer-contributions system designed to recognize overlooked infrastructural level, where making work visible is inseparable from continuous evaluation and comparison. See (18) for “invisibility to platform metrics” and (19) for “recognition justice”.

3. The service name inverts **Panopticon**, signaling a shift from centralized observation to omnidirectional surveillance. Visibility is inferred from interactions between third parties rather than direct observation, a logic materialized in features such as **Name Circulation** and **Relational Risk Alert**, where relational data is analyzed and rendered actionable. See (15) for “external inferred observation”.

4. The **Work about Work** card renders activities such as idea circulation, coordination, and networking explicitly visible. While often treated as indirect or invisible labor, these practices are translated into comparable metrics, resurfacing a central tension in critical HCI labor research: What holds making hidden work visible to enable recognition from extending managerial capture?



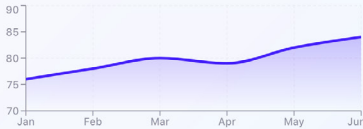
NOC IT PO NAP

Sarah Mitchell
ID: E-2847 | Product Design | Joined Mar 2021

Visibility Index

84 / 100

Your current visibility score across the organization is **84 / 100**, showing a recent upward trend.



Work about Work

Ideas that spread **Moderate**

Coordination overhead **6.2 hrs/wk**

Key connections made **3**



Relational Risk Alert

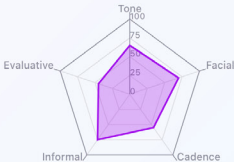
Predicted change in direct management

Your direct manager **Dave** is likely to change department, which is estimated to impact your visibility within the organization by approximately **-18%**.



Charisma Signal

Your current charisma signal score is **61 / 100**, derived from tone, facial availability, and response cadence.



Embodied Presence Gap

Within your department:

Haven't met in person **28%**

Haven't seen on call **12%**

This affects whether your name comes up during decision-making.

Work visibility

Until work is noticed **3.2 days**

Influence on decisions **low**

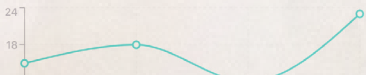
Work timing **often misaligned**



Name Circulation (Last 30 Days)

Your name has appeared across the organization in the following ways:

Contribution summary



AI Query Activity

1613
Agentic AI systems have been queried to form impressions of your contribution and expertise.

NOC IT PO NAP

Sarah Mitchell

ID: E-2847 | Product Design | Joined Mar 2021

Visibility Index

84 / 100

Your current visibility score across the organization is **84 / 100**, showing a recent upward trend.



Work about Work

Ideas that spread **Moderate**

Coordination overhead **6.2 hrs/wk**

Key connections made **3**

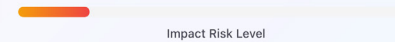


Relational Risk Alert

Predicted change in direct management

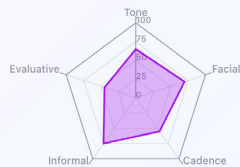
Your direct manager **Dave** is likely to change department, which is estimated to impact your visibility within the organization by approximately

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Until work is noticed **3.2 days**

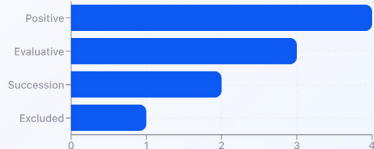
Influence on decisions **low**

Work timing **often misaligned**



Name Circulation (Last 30 Days)

Your name has appeared across the organization in the following contexts:

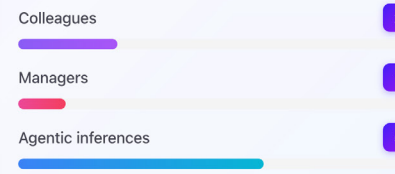


Contribution summary



AI Query Activity

Agentic AI systems have been queried to form impressions of your contribution and expertise.



5. By aligning legitimacy with what algorithms can register, NOCITPONAP encourages continuous adjustment to optimize system outputs. This risks behavioral homogenization, echoing concerns that widespread organizational use of writing assistants may lead to linguistic convergence and expressive narrowing [52]. There comes an AI with its epistemology [2]; credibility accrues not to what workers know or contribute, but to what can be rendered legible within the system's representational limits.

6. The **Presence Gap** card frames visibility in relation to expected patterns of availability and responsiveness. By rendering deviations from continuous or synchronized presence as gaps, the system implicitly establishes a normative model of "proper" work rhythms. Such representations risk marginalizing diverse working patterns shaped by care, disability, time zones, or alternative productivity practices. See (10) for "risk of deviation", (12) for "satisfying evaluative logic", and (17) for "visibility infrastructures and recognition".

7. The **AI Query Activity** card foregrounds agentic AI as an epistemic intermediary within the visibility regime. Colleagues and managers interrogate AI agents about individuals' contributions, work styles, or expertise, displacing judgment into mediated inference. Knowledge about workers is thus produced through delegated epistemic labor, embedding additional layers of interpretation and authority into everyday organizational sensemaking. See (8) for "delegated labor", (13) for "external delegation", and (9) for "delegated accountability".

The AI Agent Delegation interface allows workers to configure how AI agents act on their behalf within organizational workflows. Users can assign agents to visibility-related tasks and select levels of autonomy, from guided assistance to autonomous operation. Each configuration is accompanied by predicted

A pink, horned, and spotted creature with a large belly, wearing yellow bangles, and holding a small object in its mouth.

Configure how AI agents operate within your workflow

Select the areas where AI agents can assist you:

Contribution & Collaboration

📈 Visibility

Autonomous mode increases efficiency but requires clear guidelines. Ensure proper monitoring systems are in place.

AI operates independently with minimal oversight

Predicted Impact:

Visibility Index **100 / 100** **+16**

Charisma Signal **86 / 100** **+25**

- AI proactively identifies tasks and executes them independently
- Automated decision-making within defined parameters
- Self-optimizing workflows with minimal human oversight

Efficiency 96%

Accuracy 72%

Speed 98%

Category	Percentage
Overseen	72%
Oversight Required	28%

Human oversight and approval for AI actions

Visibility Index Charisma Signal

View impact

- AI suggests actions and waits for approval
- Human-in-the-loop for critical decisions
- Collaborative approach with explicit confirmations

Efficiency 68%

Accuracy 96%

Speed 54%

Category	Percentage
Oversight Required	94%

[← Back](#)

✓ Apply Settings

1615

8. Prior research shows that AI assistance can shape how professional communication is perceived: while limited AI use in routine, factual tasks may appear efficient, higher levels of AI-assisted writing can negatively affect impressions of the sender [5]. Delegating visibility-related communication-making to AI agents extends this dynamic, shifting impression-making from situated human judgment to **automated representation**. See (7) and (13) on “delegated labor”, and (9) on “delegated accountability”.



9. Acting through agents introduces psychological distance that diffuses responsibility and reduces concern for those affected [26]. In organizational settings, delegating visibility work to AI agents redistributes not only labor but also moral friction: questionable decisions appear procedural rather than ethical, and harmful outcomes appear automated rather than authored. Delegation thus reshapes how responsibility and accountability are experienced within algorithmic visibility regimes. See (7) on “delegated labor” and (8) on “automated representation”.

10. By presenting delegation as a choice between evaluated modes, the interface frames a limited set of evaluated options. Predictions create pressure to choose, and the interface frames a limited set of evaluative information in which to choose.

10. By presenting delegation as a choice between pre-evaluated modes, the interface frames autonomy as selection among optimized options. Predicted impacts on visibility metrics create pressure to choose configurations that best align with the evaluative infrastructure, producing a coordination dynamic in which deviation becomes risky. Autonomy here offers a sense of control, while choices remain constrained by a broader regime of algorithmic visibility and its consequences. See (6) on “automated visibility” and (8) on “automated representation”.



Enhancement Options

Predicted Impact:

Visibility: 100Charisma: 100

Emotional: -20%Influence: -20%

AI Avatar

☐ Replace appearance with AI-generated avatar

Enhancement Filter

☐ Real-time appearance and voice enhancement

☒ No Enhancement

Use current setup without modifications

Camera



Disable Camera

Mute

Audio

☒ Computer Audio

Microphone

Built-in Microphone

Speakers

Built-in Speakers

☐ Phone Audio

☐ Room Audio

☐ No Audio

Enhancement Options

Predicted Impact:

Visibility: 130Charisma: 130

Emotional: +10%Influence: +30%

AI Avatar

☐ Replace appearance with AI-generated avatar

Enhancement Filter

☒ Real-time appearance and voice enhancement

☐ No Enhancement

Use current setup without modifications

Camera



Disable Camera

Mute

Audio

☒ Computer Audio

Microphone

Built-in Microphone

Speakers

Built-in Speakers

☐ Phone Audio

☐ Room Audio

☐ No Audio

Enhancement Options

Predicted Impact:

Visibility: 150Charisma: 150

Emotional: +50%Influence: +60%

AI Avatar

☒ Replace appearance with AI-generated avatar

Enhancement Filter

☐ Real-time appearance and voice enhancement

☐ No Enhancement

Use current setup without modifications

Camera



Disable Camera

Mute

Audio

☒ Computer Audio

Microphone

Built-in Microphone

Speakers

Built-in Speakers

☐ Phone Audio

☐ Room Audio

☐ No Audio

4.3. Better You

BetterYou is a third-party virtual camera service that allows workers to configure how they appear in video-mediated workplace interactions. Operating alongside official collaboration platforms, the system offers multiple modes of visual mediation, including AI-generated avatars, real-time appearance and voice enhancement, and unmodified camera feeds. Each option is accompanied by predicted effects on visibility-related metrics, positioning visual self-presentation as an adjustable input within broader algorithmic visibility infrastructures.

11. CSCW research reports that visual self-presentation in video-mediated work is actively managed to shape professional impressions. Li and Zhang [35] note that workers choose virtual backgrounds not only to conceal personal surroundings but also to appear more professional in high-stakes meetings. Cook et al. [16] further demonstrate that seemingly peripheral cues such as facial expression systematically bias professional judgment, producing stable and shared evaluations across observers. See (16) for “emotional performance” and “performative demand” and visibility through online meetings.

12. By attaching predicted visibility and charisma scores to appearance configurations, BetterYou transforms self-presentation into a coordination problem. Although multiple options remain available, each is pre-evaluated against the same visibility metrics, rendering non-optimization visibly costly. In this configuration, choice persists formally, yet workers are pressured to align with options that best satisfy the evaluative logic of the surrounding visibility infrastructure, producing a constrained and normatively guided sense of control. See (6) for “normative model” and “proper work rhythms”, and (10) for “risk of deviation”.

13. Findings by Yoshida et al. [56] show that having AI animate one’s visual behavior or converse on one’s behalf can shape impressions in multiple and sometimes unexpected ways. The AI Avatar option in BetterYou extends this logic by allowing workers to substitute embodied presence with an animated, optimized proxy. Impression-making is thus partially delegated to algorithmic animation, blurring the boundary between self-presentation and synthetic representation within workplace interactions. See (16) for “algorithmic support”, and (7), (8), and (9) for themes around “delegation”.



4.4. Impression Checker

Impression Checker is a fictional third-party service that provides real-time feedback on how a worker is perceived during video-mediated meetings. Operating independently from organizational visibility dashboards, the system analyzes live webcam and microphone streams to detect engagement and presence cues—such as nodding, smiling, eye contact, or interjections—and surfaces moment-to-moment suggestions for behavioral adjustment. Impression Checker frames impression management as a continuous, optimizable process that runs alongside workplace interactions without directly feeding into corporate evaluation systems.

14. Mehrvarz et al. [38] describe “visibility showmanship” as a dissonance between fulfilling work responsibilities and managing self-presentation. They further frame online meetings as “visibility stages” where participation and legitimacy in remote settings. Impression Checker intensifies this dynamic by transforming engagement cues to real-time behavioral scripting. Rather than leaving engagement cues to situational judgment, the system issues imperative prompts—when to speak, how to respond, and which expressions to display—rendering participation a continuously **corrected performance** during meetings. See (1) for “evaluative judgment” and (13) for “external algorithmic entity”.

15. By asserting interpretations of others’ affective states as actionable facts, Impression Checker extends omni-directional surveillance into the interpersonal domain. Engagement is no longer governed solely by how peers are perceived to feel. Visibility is thus regulated through distributed and external inferred observation, where workers are responsabilized for responding to signals generated from conversations and reactions that are not their own. See (3) on “omni-directional surveillance”.

16. Impression Checker can be read as an extrapolation of known workplace hacks (mouse jigglers) marketed to simulate activity and prevent availability indicators from switching to idle states in platforms like Teams or Slack. Sum et al. [46] document how workers rely on similar everyday resistance tactics to survive the exhaustion of pervasive monitoring. While such devices manipulate minimal signals of presence, Impression Checker extends this logic to affective and relational cues, offering algorithmic support for emotional performance. Prior work shows that online meetings heighten self-monitoring and facial dissatisfaction and fatigue while reinforcing participation as a performative rather than communicative demand [36]. What begins as a workaround to evade visibility metrics becomes a dedicated product for managing them, formalizing performative labor as a purchasable and optimizable service. See (11) on the role of “facial expression” in visibility through online meetings.



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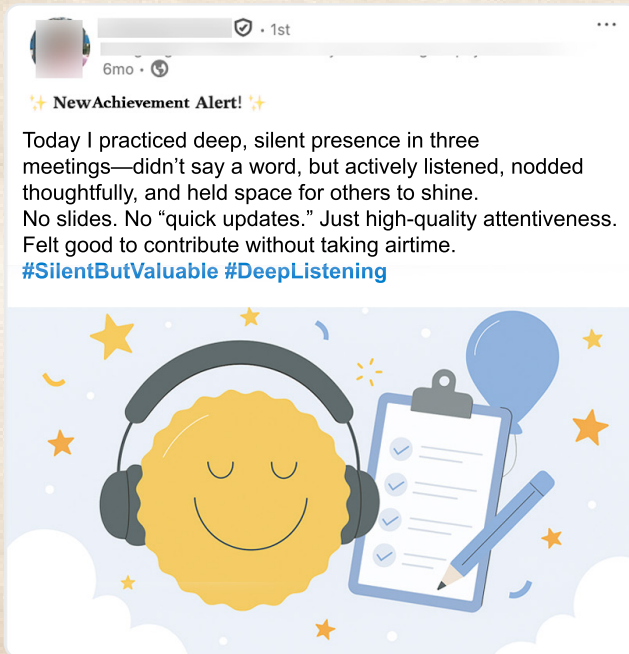
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4.5. Hashtag Invisible Labor

Hashtag Invisible Labor adopts a satirical approach by materializing a fictional social media trend that publicly celebrates forms of work typically rendered invisible within algorithmic workplace visibility infrastructures. Through a series of speculative posts modeled after celebratory templates on professional networking platforms, the artifact foregrounds activities such as deep thinking, attentive listening, emotional support, and maintenance work. By translating these often-unrecognized practices into shareable achievements, the artifact explores how workers attempt to reclaim recognition for labor that remains structurally illegible to dominant metrics of productivity, contribution, and presence.



17. The visual language of Hashtag Invisible Labor draws directly from the celebratory post templates of professional networking platforms, which are typically used to mark promotions, certifications, or quantifiable achievements such as listening, reflection, or care, the artifact to celebrate activities such as what is deemed worthy of recognition. Over time, these design choices establish normative reward circuits that shape workplace expectations, privileging expressive, extroverted, and immediately legible contributions while marginalizing others. See (6) on "normative model" and "proper work rhythm", (10) on "risk of deviation", and (12) on "satisfying evaluative logic".
18. Prior research has shown that when labor remains invisible to platform metrics, it is systematically undervalued. For example, Toxli et al. [48] quantify the uncompensated overhead work performed by crowd workers and show that accounting for this hidden labor reduces effective hourly wages about 3 USD. The posts in Hashtag Invisible Labor echo this dynamic by making visible forms of effort that are essential yet structurally excluded from the current formal recognition paradigm, illustrating how invisibility translates into material and ethical inequities. See (2) on "invisible work", (7) and (8) on "delegated labor", and (19) for "recognition justice".
19. When labor is rendered invisible it is often unrecognized or devalued. Fox et al. [23] document how critical forms of labor such as data labeling and content moderation remain hidden behind algorithmic systems, while Duffy et al. [20] show that social media professionals experience their work as socially and economically invisible due to a lack of attribution and status. Hashtag Invisible Labor frames this condition as a threat to recognition justice; a concept from political philosophy that requires acknowledgment by others to develop and maintain a secure sense of identity and dignity [53]. See (18) on "invisibility to platform metrics" and (2) on "invisible work".

5. Discussion

Read together, the speculative artifacts presented in this pictorial do not describe a single system, workflow, or future scenario. Instead, they articulate an ecology of algorithmic actors that support a tangible understanding of how workplace visibility is produced, anticipated, optimized, delegated, and contested. Meaning emerges not within any individual artifact, but across their relations and tensions. From these entanglements, we surface three explicit implications that extend, refine, and challenge existing HCI approaches to collaboration technologies.

5.1. Visibility Shifts from Witnessing to Inference

Across our artifacts, visibility is repeatedly enacted as an inferential process rather than a matter of direct human witnessing. Whether through visibility indices or delegated actions, recognition is produced by systems that probabilistically assemble traces into evaluative claims. This observation refines foundational CSCW theories regarding the dangers of making work visible. While Star and Strauss [45] warned that converting nuanced human effort into “abstract indicators” invites Taylorist control, our ecology demonstrates how algorithmic systems evolve this threat. In the AI-powered workplace, abstract indicators are no longer static metrics reviewed by a human manager; they are dynamic, opaque inferences generated by stochastic reasoning. By highlighting this shift from human witnessing to algorithmic inference, we argue that HCI must pivot away from its historical instinct to simply “make hidden work visible.” Instead, designers must prioritize “positive invisibility”—creating intentional digital seams and friction that allow workers to exercise professional discretion without generating a probabilistic trace. In our ecology, Impression checker and BetterYou highlight this gap clearly provoking a need for HCI research to articulate and conceptualize such positive and deliberate invisibility affordances to prevent the gap from being filled by opportunistic third-party product.

5.2. Optimization and Resistance are Co-produced

Rather than appearing as opposing forces, optimization and resistance emerge as mutually constitutive dynamics within the visibility ecosystem. Our artifacts show that attempts to evade or subvert visibility metrics often reproduce the same logics of anticipation and performance. Here, we provide a materialized extrapolation of foundational HCI scholarship on worker resistance to algorithmic management. Lee et al. [34] demonstrated that workers managed by opaque algorithms frequently attempt to “game the system”—manipulating their availability or rejecting tasks—to reclaim autonomy. Sum et al. [46] similarly document tactics of hiding, obfuscation, or deliberate delaying to survive pervasive consequences. Our artifacts suggest a near-future where resistance evolves from these manual subversions into algorithmic delegation. In tools like BetterYou, workers do not just manually hide or game the metrics; they deploy AI proxies to perform the emotional labor of visibility for them. In doing so, resistance is commodified and absorbed directly into the algorithmic ecology. Consequently, when evaluating new AI workplace tools, HCI researchers cannot merely measure classic metrics such efficiency and accuracy or even trust and transparency. We must introduce a new metric to consider the imposed performative burden. HCI researchers and developers who create collaboration technologies must evaluate whether an AI tool forces workers to spend more cognitive energy managing how the algorithm perceives them, thereby exacerbating the exhaustion of visibility, urge for third-party proxies, or pressure to undergo organizational delegation norms.

5.3. Mediation Intensifies While Accountability Remains Human

A final pattern concerns the redistribution of action without a corresponding redistribution of responsibility. As visibility work becomes increasingly mediated, algorithmic systems act more directly on workers’ behalf, yet accountability consistently collapses back onto the

human subject. Our ecology challenges the prevailing HCI assumption that algorithmic workplace harms can be mitigated simply by granting workers more transparent dashboards or individual privacy controls. Kapoor et al. [29] demonstrate that in environments characterized by “refractive surveillance”—where digital collaboration tools are simultaneously instruments of employer monitoring—privacy and visibility are inherently collective. An individual’s digital footprint inevitably implicates their network. NOCITPONAP and delegation specifically translate this networked vulnerability to the realm of performance metrics. If one worker uses an AI agent to perfectly optimize their visibility, it shifts the normative baseline for the entire team, forcing peers to comply or risk professional exile. Therefore, HCI can no longer evaluate a single workplace tool in isolation. Designers must shift their unit of analysis from individual user agency to holistic ecology of technology and organizational context, anticipating how single features interact with third-party optimization apps, peer pressures, and managerial prerogatives.

6. Conclusion

In this pictorial, by pairing speculative artifacts with marginal exegesis, we materialize the often-hidden tensions of AI-mediated work, surfacing how visibility is reorganized through algorithmic inference rather than human witnessing, delegated action rather than accountable judgment, and commodified resistance rather than straightforward refusal. As agentic AI and predictive analytics saturate collaboration platforms, visibility transforms from a means of professional recognition into a coercive performative demand. To meaningfully address these evolving workplace harms, HCI must move beyond its historical instinct to simply “make work visible”, we urge the community to shift its unit of analysis to the broader organizational ecology—evaluating the performative burden of introducing new AI proxies, and actively designing for positive invisibility.

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**“No one who’s raw can grasp the state of one who’s burned through;
So let the talk be brief—and peace be upon you.”**

Rumi (13th-century)

This verse serves as Rumi’s “threshold” statement, at the end of the introduction of a fundamental Sufism book: “Masnavi”. He is marking the **boundary between intellectual study and lived experience**. In his philosophy, “ripeness” is **not** achieved through reading books (even his), but through the “**fire**” of life experiences which “**cooks**” the ego until it is soft and sweet. Rumi uses this couplet to warn his audience that **language is a clumsy tool**; it can describe the shape of a fruit, but never its taste. By ending with “**peace upon you**”, he is practicing a spiritual “**mic-drop**”—admitting that if the reader hasn’t yet felt the heat of the fire, no amount of further poetry will make them understand it. Ever since, it became a classic Persian literature adaptation to finish a piece by this verse. We thought in our case—especially in a pictorial format—it is best to bring this tradition as a form of “**Thank you for your attention**”.

