

School of Management and Marketing
Seminar Notice

TITLE : **Indeterminate meaning as cause of the Columbia shuttle disaster**

SPEAKER : **Professor Roger Dunbar**
Stern School of Business
New York University

DAY/DATE: **Wednesday, 7 November 2007**

TIME : 12.30-1.30p.m.

VENUE : **40A.681**

ABSTRACT

The paper illustrates distributed cognition and its consequences by focusing on NASA and the ill-fated Columbia shuttle flight. We describe how different organizing modes had developed over time in NASA and how they categorized information differently, making it organizationally impossible to determine what had happened to the flight. In addition, distributed cognition 1) nullified the search effort NASA authorized to find out what had happened, and 2) created irresolvable conflicts for mindful managers working in different parts of NASA. We conclude that because distributed cognition affects interpretation processes, organizations ideally draw on the insights of a "pilot team" that appreciates the perspectives of different organizing modes.

Lunch will be provided.

SMM Research Seminar Series Convenors,
Joshua Chang & Karin Garrety