



Mini-track ID: AMCIS-MT-67-2008  
Mini-track title: The Role of ICTs in Organizational Networking  
Track: General Track

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## Description

In response to the increasingly knowledge-intensive nature of work and to the need to respond quickly to an increasingly dynamic environment, organizations are moving away from traditional hierarchical/functional structures. Thus, matrix, virtual, cross-functional, inter-organizational and project-based structures are increasingly common. A key characteristic of these new organizational forms is that they are more stretched or distributed, meaning that there are a 2 variety of boundaries that separate the individuals who are working collaboratively together. These boundaries arise from functional, geographical, organizational and practice-based differences. Overcoming these boundaries is often difficult because people have different understandings and interests. In these situations, networking (both formal and informal) is often essential to help to reduce social distance and so increase shared understanding and allow for the negotiation of interests. However, in distributed organizations such networking must often rely on using ICTs since face-to-face meetings may be limited. Exploring the ways people use different types of ICTs to network with others in the course of their work and the impact of this on reinforcing or reducing existing boundaries is an important focus of research. For example, new types of social computing options may potentially facilitate informal communication and so enhance knowledge sharing, but this potential may depend on the extent to which an organization monitors this activity.

The goal of this track, therefore, is to explore the role of ICTs to support or impede networking and communication activities that support information and knowledge sharing in today's distributed organizational environment. Specifically, we are interested in papers that explore issues and challenges related to ICT use in distributed contexts and that promote indepth understanding of how, and with what consequences, ICTs are used in both informal and formal networking to promote knowledge sharing and information exchange. We are especially interested in novel approaches to understanding the phenomenon, papers with strong managerial implications, and welcome not only empirical or theory testing papers but also theory building papers.

## Suggested Topics

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- The role and impact of ICTs in the context of different organizational forms
- The role of social computing in supporting knowledge-related organizational processes
- The role of ICTs in fostering knowledge creating activities

- The impact of organizational monitoring of ICT content on networking activities
- The ICT choices for informal communications
- The role of ICTs in supporting virtual communities within and across organizations
- Strategic Issues in the use of Web 2.0 and Enterprise 2.0