

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on E-Collaboration: Emerging Trends and Applications

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Detailed Table of Contents

Preface xv

Acknowledgment..... xvii

Section 1 **Emerging Issues and Debate**

Chapter 1

Achieving World Peace through International Trade: Can E-Collaboration Technologies Help Make this Happen? 1
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Can e-collaboration technologies help achieve world peace by supporting international trade? At first glance, this seems like an unusual and somewhat nonsensical question. The variables involved, particularly international trade and world peace, may appear to be too broad and socially complex to be meaningfully influenced by e-collaboration technologies. Also, the connection between these variables, if it exists, seems at best counterintuitive. Yet, there is empirical evidence that humans might have evolved what could be called a trading instinct, with the fitness-enhancing goal of either reducing or eliminating the likelihood of violent conflict between trading groups. This would explain why so many people seem compelled to engage in trade interactions, even when they do not need the goods or services that are being traded. This chapter argues that such trading instinct might have evolved, and if it did, that the evolution of the trading instinct happened in the context of face-to-face interactions. Therefore, the same instinct in modern humans would require e-collaboration media of high naturalness (i.e., high face-to-face similarity) to properly play its conflict reduction role. In this sense, e-collaboration media naturalness may act as a moderator of the effect that trade may have on the trading parties' predispositions to later engage in or support violent conflict, either with each other or with members of the trading parties' national groups.

Chapter 2

Supporting Synchronous Collaboration with Heterogeneous Devices..... 12
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The increasing availability of mobile devices in today’s business contexts raises the demand to shift the focus of groupware framework design. Instead of solely focusing on functional requirements of specific application domains or device characteristics, non-functional requirements need to be taken into account as well. Flexibility concerning the integration of devices and tailorability of the framework according to different usage contexts is essential for addressing device heterogeneity. Besides flexibility, in order to support the development of real-world applications involving heterogeneous devices, robustness and scalability concerns have to be addressed explicitly by the framework.

Chapter 3

Interpretation of Computer Based Interaction Analysis Indicators: A Significant Issue for Enhancing Collaboration in Technology Based Learning	31
<i>Tharrenos Bratitsis, University of Western Macedonia, Greece</i>	
<i>Angelique Dimitracopoulou, University of the Aegean, Greece</i>	

This chapter focuses on the explanatory and interpretation issues that arise when the integrated Interaction Analysis (IA) features are used by teachers – moderators. The importance of applying additional interpretative value to seemingly simple quantitative measurements is highlighted through several implemented case studies. The core objective of this chapter is to outline the importance of appropriate Interpretation of the IA indicators, thus enhancing collaboration in multiple levels.

Chapter 4

The Vineyard Approach: A Computational Model for Determination of Awareness Foci in E-Mail-Based Collaboration	60
<i>Adriana S. Vivacqua, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</i>	
<i>Jano Moreira de Souza, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</i>	

With the increase in information available, systems must be sensitive to users’ attention foci, minimizing interruptions, helping focus and providing information according to current tasks. The authors of this chapter investigate ways to determine awareness foci through email-based user interaction analysis. The goal is to be able to draw inferences as to with whom and about what a user is collaborating, enabling a system to automatically distribute awareness information and adapt itself according to users’ needs without much configuration.

Chapter 5

mobileSJ: Managing Multiple Activities in Mobile Collaborative Working Environments.....	80
<i>Jesus Camacho, CICESE, Mexico</i>	
<i>Leonardo Galicia, CICESE, Mexico</i>	
<i>Victor M. Gonzalez, University of Manchester, UK</i>	
<i>Jesus Favela, CICESE, Mexico</i>	

Many modern working environments are characterized by the need to manage multiple activities simultaneously. This is the case of hospital work, which also demands a high degree of mobility and collaboration among specialists. These working conditions have motivated the authors to design and implement mobileSJ, a mobile information management tool based on the concept of working spheres.

The tool allows users to gather information related to a working sphere, including documents, contacts and pending tasks. The tool assists users when switching between tasks, facilitates the sharing of activity related information with colleagues, as well as the synchronization of information among multiple devices, including handheld computers and public displays.

Section 2 **Adaptation and Creativity in E-Collaboration**

Chapter 6

Capturing the Appropriation Dynamics of Web-Based Collaboration Support in Project Team's Work Context..... 95

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This research applies contributions from the social sciences to examine how organisations adapt information systems in a project team setting. Its main concern is to study the set of events and actions implicated in the institutionalisation of an information system. The motivation for this research has been to address the following questions: why well designed information systems are so often not successfully adapted or used by organisations? How the adaptation process affects and is affected by work context characteristics? This research focuses on analyzing the adaptation process of a collaborative platform in a project team, in the context of the construction industry by applying adaptive structuration theory.

Chapter 7

Creativity Support via Terms in Thematic Relations..... 117

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Creativity is required in many fields of endeavor — especially industry and scientific research. Creative tasks considered in this chapter include not only creative tasks by single individual or multiple individuals, but also collaborative tasks accomplished by a group of individuals with support of e-collaboration technologies. The difficulty of formulating new ideas calls for the development of an environment that supports creativity. Moreover, it is known that people tend to become more creative when they use words that are related thematically rather than taxonomically. In light of this, the authors sought to extract lists of words having a thematic relation. In this chapter, the authors propose a method of extracting such word lists and verify through Web retrieval that word lists with a thematic relation can support creativity.

Chapter 8

E-Collaboration Tools and Technologies for Creativity and Innovation Enhancement 130

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This chapter describes the challenges of supporting creativity and innovation through e-collaboration technologies and tools and proposes how future technologies and tools can help to mitigate issues arising

from working virtually. The authors discuss how future advancements in communications and information sharing technologies will help to make virtual team location transparent, while improving access to common work processes and information repositories.

Chapter 9

Designing for Creativity in Computer-Supported Cooperative Work 142

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John M. Carroll, Pennsylvania State University, USA

Craig H. Ganoë, Pennsylvania State University, USA

This chapter investigates the design of tools to support everyday scientific creativity in distributed collaboration. Based on an exegesis of theoretical and empirical literature on creativity and group dynamics, the authors present and justify three requirements for supporting creativity: support for divergent and convergent thinking, development of shared objectives, and reflexivity.

Chapter 10

Determinants of Manufacturing Firms' Use of Web-Based IOISs to Share Inventory Information with Key Partners: Comparing the Supplier and Customer Perspectives..... 162

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Based on the literature on the diffusion of innovations and on information systems, and building on emerging concepts in electronic collaboration (e-collaboration), this chapter analyses the influence of various determinants on manufacturing firms' intent to use Web-based interorganizational information systems (IOISs) to share inventory information with their key suppliers. This theoretical model is tested on data collected from 498 senior managers of Canadian manufacturing firms. The findings indicate that a manufacturing firm's organizational readiness, its past experience with e-commerce and its business relationships all affect its future use of Web-based IOISs to share inventory information with its key suppliers.

Chapter 11

The Influence of Supply Chain Collaboration on Process, Relational and Product Innovations 186

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This chapter focuses on the impact of strategic and tactical collaborative actions as well as e-collaboration tools efficiency on process and relational innovations which in turn should influence product innovations. The results of this study show that tactical collaborative actions are more geared to lead firms to innovate rather than strategic actions. Findings also suggest that relational innovation has an effect on product innovation for the upstream perspective, whilst process innovation influences product innovation for the downstream perspective.

Chapter 12

Collaborative Technologies and Innovation in SMEs: An Empirical Study 204

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This study seeks to assess the impact of collaborative technologies on innovation at the firm level. Collaborative technologies' influence on innovation is considered here as a multi-stage process that starts at adoption and extends to use. Thus, the effect of collaborative technologies on innovation is examined not only directly, the simple presence of collaborative technologies, but also based on actual collaborative technologies' use. Given the fact that firms can use this technology for different purposes, collaborative technologies' use is measured according to three orientations: e-information, e-communication and e-workflow. To achieve these objectives, a research model is developed for assessing, on the one hand, the impact of the adoption and use of collaborative technologies on innovation and, on the other hand, the relationship between adoption and use of collaborative technologies.

Chapter 13

The Launch of Web-Based Collaborative Decision Support at NASA..... 218

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Today, organizations rely on decision-makers to produce "mission critical" decisions that are based on inputs from multiple domains. The ideal decision-maker has a profound understanding of specific domains coupled with the experience that allows them to act quickly and decisively on the information. Daily they face problems and failures that are too difficult for any individual person to solve; therefore teams are now required who share their knowledge in spontaneous collaborations. Since requisite expertise may not all reside in the same organization, nor be geographically co-located, virtual networked teams are needed. This chapter presents a case study describing the development and use of Postdoc, the first Web-based collaborative and knowledge management platform deployed at NASA.

Chapter 14

Information Technology Adoption by Groups Across Time 231

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Today's technologies can support joint, but physically disparate work efforts. Some groups of professionals that could benefit from using these technologies do not adopt them, while others use the technologies frequently. This study provides an in-depth examination of how and when one organization accepted technology in their decision making efforts. The research examines actual usage of the technology rather than the less strong, but more common measure, intention to use technology. As a result, the chapter has helped bridge the gap between what people intend to do and what they actually do, thereby providing both a stronger theoretical basis for the TAM model and some insights into the evolution of the TAM model.

Chapter 15

A Comparison of Audio-Conferencing and Computer Conferencing in a Dispersed Negotiation

Setting: Efficiency Matters! 254

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This chapter presents the results of an empirical study to examine the effectiveness of a computerized negotiation support system (NSS) in supporting bargaining carried out in a dispersed, but synchronous setting. In the study, pairs of college students, using the NSS, participated in a simulated industrial bargaining scenario that tested the impact of communication media employed and level of conflict on contract outcomes and negotiator attitudes. The subjects, located in separate rooms, played the roles of buyer and seller engaged in negotiations either by telephone (audio-conferencing) or Lotus Notes (computer conferencing). In both low and high conflict, the efficiency aspects of audio-conferencing – a richer medium in which more communication can take place more quickly – overshadowed any negative social cues transmitted.

Chapter 16

The Role of Culture in Knowledge Management: A Case Study of Two Global Firms..... 278

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Using a case study approach to compare and contrast the cultures and knowledge management approaches of two organizations, the study suggests the ways in which organizational culture influences knowledge management initiatives as well as the evolution of knowledge management in organizations. Whereas in one organization, the KM effort became little more than an information repository, in the second organization, the KM effort evolved into a highly collaborative system fostering the formation of electronic communities.

Section 3

Advanced Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Chapter 17

Can Virtual Worlds Support E-Collaboration and E-Commerce? A Look at Second Life and

World of Warcraft 300

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Recent years have seen the growing use of virtual worlds such as Second Life and World of Warcraft for entertainment and business purposes, and a rising interest from researchers in the impact that virtual worlds can have on patterns of e-collaboration behavior and collaborative task outcomes. This chapter looks into whether actual work can be accomplished in virtual worlds, whether virtual worlds can provide the basis for trade (B2C and C2C e-commerce), and whether they can serve as a platform for credible

studies of e-collaboration behavior and related outcomes. The conclusion reached at is that virtual worlds hold great potential in each of these three areas, even though there are certainly pitfalls ahead.

Chapter 18

Electronic Deception: How Proximity, Computer-Mediation, and the Truth Bias May Influence

Deceptive Messages..... 312

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This research examines the impact of computer-mediated communication, distributed communication, and knowledge of prior baseline behavior on an individual's propensity to make veracity judgments. Subjects were motivated to detect deception by participating in a Prisoner's Dilemma game with monetary rewards. Methodologies of other deception detection studies are compared and existing theoretical models are extended. This study found that more detection confidence can come from knowledge of a person's prior baseline behavior, being proximally located, the type of communication media used, and perceived relational closeness. These factors indirectly lead to less deception detection through more detection confidence and reliance on the truth bias, a fundamental belief in the truthfulness of others, even in a computer mediated environment.

Chapter 19

Advertised Waist-to-Hip Ratios of Online Female Escorts: An Evolutionary Perspective 338

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The Web's global reach provides evolutionary behavioral scientists unique opportunities to investigate human universals steeped in a common and evolved human nature. This chapter argues that many forms of online sexual communication are indicative of our evolved mating minds including the manner by which female escorts are "advertised" online. It is demonstrated that online advertisers provide a restricted set of morphological cues whilst advertising female escorts, these being congruent with men's evolved aesthetic preferences. Specifically, it is shown that irrespective of cultural setting, online escorts advertise waist-to-hip ratios (WHR) that are in line with the near-universal male preference for women that possess WHRs of 0.70.

Chapter 20

When Technology Does Not Support Learning: Conflicts Between Epistemological Beliefs

and Technology Support in Virtual Learning Environments 348

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Central to the design of successful virtual learning initiatives is the matching of technology to the needs of the training environment. The difficulty is that while the technology may be designed to complement and support the learning process, not all users of these systems find the technology supportive. Instead, some users' conceptions of learning, or epistemological beliefs may be in conflict with their perceptions

of what the technology supports. Using data from 307 individuals, this research study investigated the process and outcome losses that occur when friction exists between individuals' epistemological beliefs and their perceptions of how the technology supports learning. Specifically, the results indicated that when there was friction between the technology support of learning and an individual's epistemological beliefs course communication, course satisfaction, and course performance were reduced. Implications for design of virtual learning environments and future research are discussed.

Chapter 21

Interdepartmental Knowledge Transfer Success During Information Technology Projects..... 366

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This chapter reports on a study that investigates the knowledge transfer between an information systems/technology (IT) department and non-IT departments during information technology projects. More specifically, the authors look into the link between the knowledge management capabilities of the IT department and the effectiveness and efficiency of the knowledge transfer to a client department. Knowledge management capabilities are defined by Gold et al. (2001) as the combination of knowledge infrastructure capabilities (structural, technical, and cultural) and knowledge processes capabilities (acquisition, conversion, application, and protection). Data collected through a web-based survey result in 127 usable questionnaires completed by managers in large Canadian organizations. Data analysis performed using PLS indicates that knowledge infrastructure capabilities are related to the knowledge transfer success, and more specifically to its effectiveness whereas knowledge processes capabilities are only related to the efficiency of such transfer.

Compilation of References 387

About the Contributors 437

Index..... 449