



Organization Science

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Organization Science—Special Issue on Information Technology and Organizational Form and Function

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Call for Papers

Organization Science—Special Issue on Information Technology and Organizational Form and Function

Guest Editors

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Intellectual Context. Relatively little work has focused on the role of technology in organizations since Woodward, Thompson, and Perrow's seminal research in the 1950s and 1960s. This lack of attention raises several questions that form the underlying theme of this special issue. From an organization science perspective, if today's organizations are increasingly reliant on information technology (IT), to what extent do our theory and research findings accurately reflect IT's impact on organizational form and function? Do our existing theories adequately explain the impact of IT on organizations? From an information systems perspective, just as organizations are designed, IT is designed as well. Yet there is little research describing the design of IT from the perspective of organizational form and function. Much research still relies on Galbraith's original portrayal, written in the 1970s, of information's role in enabling faster and more flexible responses to increasingly unstable environments. More sophisticated conceptual models are needed.

Possible Topics. Given the relative paucity of research and theory, this special issue is directed at providing a forum for scholars to develop and test theories that open the black boxes of organizations and IT at the same time, providing an improved understanding of how each affects the other's design and function. Papers that consider both the complexities of organizational systems and IT are particularly encouraged. Possible themes for papers include:

(1) How has IT affected the structuring of organizations and the processes within them, such as decision making, job design, communication, power, and political behavior?

(2) How can we describe organizations in a way that makes the critical IT components clear?

(3) Do our current concepts related to individual and group behavior need to be modified to reflect the impact of IT? For example, do we need to include locational and temporal dimensions into models of group behavior?

(4) How has IT affected the creation, management, and performance of interorganizational relationships, such as alliances, outsourcing, supply chain management, and off-shoring?

(5) Does the design of information technologies, such as those using the semantic analysis of language, serve as new models for understanding how people can identify experts in loosely coupled organizations?

(6) Because the concept of an "alignment" between information systems and organizations is too vague to inform specific testable hypotheses, specific aspects of this alignment need to be examined. Is one needed to catalyze the other? Could one compensate for the lack in another? Which aspects of each really need to be aligned for successful organizational functioning?

(7) Given that distributed and situated cognition may now occur in highly computer-mediated ways, how does the design of information-organizational systems impede or facilitate heedful interrelating?

Papers may focus on any level of analysis, although multilevel analyses are preferred. Similarly, both theoretical and empirical work will be considered, although papers that are able to combine the two are preferred. We are also looking for papers that go beyond general sociotechnical and structuration approaches.

Submission Process. We are using a two-step process in selecting manuscripts for publication in this special issue. The first step is reviewing one- or two-page summaries outlining papers being proposed for the special issue, which should be e-mailed to any one of the guest editors by May 1, 2005. These summaries will be used to screen each proposed paper's topic to ensure a close fit with the theme of the special issue. Completed manuscripts along with any supplementary files should be submitted electronically at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/orgsci>, by November 1, 2005.