December 2004

Panel: Challenges to Facilitating Virtual Database Project Teams

Laku Chidambaram
University of Oklahoma

Traci Carte
University of Oklahoma

Catherine Beise
Salisbury University

Chelley Vician
Michigan Tech University

Panel: Challenges to Facilitating
Virtual Database Project Teams

Laku Chidambaram (Moderator)
University of Oklahoma
laku@ou.edu

Traci Carte
University of Oklahoma
tcarte@ou.edu

Catherine Beise
Salisbury University
cmbeise@salisbury.edu

Chelley Vician
Michigan Tech University
cvician@mtu.edu

ABSTRACT

The moderator and panelists recently coordinated a virtual team project involving students from their respective universities. MIS students from each university were organized into cross-institution project teams and tasked with designing a database. All courses used the same textbook and the same semester-long project with four clearly defined deliverables. Student team members used groupware (Yahoo! Groups) to communicate, work together, share draft documents, discuss and solve problems, and turn in their project deliverables. Team members were anonymous other than their Yahoo! identifiers. The participating instructors also used Yahoo! Groups to provide project requirements, post project files, and answer student questions in a shared workspace.

The panelists will share their experiences by presenting and discussing technical, organizational, and communication challenges that arose during the semester; student processes and outcomes; and implications for understanding virtual project teams. The panelists will solicit questions and comments from the audience, and will offer lessons learned and prescriptions for others who would like to undertake similar efforts.

The panelists have all published related research in this area, and all have instructional experience in the panel topics.

Keywords

Virtual Teams, Groupware, Project Management, IS Education

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

Laku Chidambaram is the W.P. Wood Professor of MIS at the Michael F. Price College of Business, University of Oklahoma (OU). Prior to this he held faculty appointments at Indiana University and the University of Hawaii. His primary area of research deals with virtual teams and the application of information technology to support distributed group work in organizations. He is the co-editor of a book, *Our Virtual World: The Transformation of Work, Play and Life via Technology;* executive editor of the *e-Service Journal;* and associate editor of *Information Systems Research* and *Group Decision and Negotiation*. His work has received external funding and been published in such journals as *MIS Quarterly, Journal of MIS, Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce* and *Group Decision and Negotiation*. Dr. Chidambaram is the executive director of the Center for MIS Studies, a partnership between OU's MIS faculty, businesses and government organizations. He has also served as a consultant and lectured in various countries including Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore and the United States.

Catherine M. Beise is an Associate Professor of IS at the Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University in Maryland, where she teaches Database Management and other IS courses. She holds a Ph.D. from the College of Business at Georgia State University and an MS in Information and Computer Science from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She has held prior faculty appointments at Kennesaw State University and Florida Gulf Coast University. Her current research interests include implementation and facilitation of electronic support for group work and on-line learning, and diversity in the IT

workforce. She has published in *MIS Quarterly*, *Communications of the AIS*, and other outlets. Dr. Beise's previous experience includes work in industry as a consultant, systems analyst, and programmer for a large computer vendor, a telecommunications company, and a systems consulting firm.

Traci A. Carte is an Assistant Professor of MIS in the Michael F. Price College of Business at the University of Oklahoma. She received her Ph.D. in MIS from the University of Georgia. Currently, her research interests include virtual team performance, power and politics, and research methods. Her research has been published in *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, *Decision Support Systems*, *PublicProductivity and Management Review* and *Communications of the AIS*. She primarily teaches Database in the University of Oklahoma's undergraduate MIS program and has received numerous teaching awards. Dr. Carte has several years experience working as a Data Administrator.

Chelley Vician is an Associate Professor of Information Systems at the School of Business and Economics at Michigan Technological University. She holds a Ph.D. in MIS from the University of Minnesota and an MBA in MIS and International Business from the University of Notre Dame. Prior to her graduate degrees, she worked as an information systems professional in the banking, health care, fundraising, government, and education sectors. Her current research interests include technology-mediated learning/e-learning, computer-mediated communication anxiety, and the adoption and use of digital collaboration systems. She has presented her research findings at several international and national conferences. Her work has appeared in the *Communications of the AIS*, *Journal of the AIS*, *Group Decision and Negotiation*, and other journals. Dr. Vician reviews for several leading scholarly journals and also serves on the editorial board of the *e-Services Journal*.