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Nicholas C. Romano Jr.  
*Oklahoma State University*

James Pick  
*University of Redlands*

Narczyz Roztocki  
*State University of New York at New Paltz*

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# Cross-Organizational and Cross-Border IS/IT Collaboration: Mini-Track Introduction

**Nicholas C. Romano, Jr.**  
Oklahoma State University  
nicholas.romano@okstate.edu

**James B. Pick**  
University of Redlands  
james\_pick@redlands.edu

**Narcyz Roztocki**  
State University of New York at New Paltz  
roztockn@newpaltz.edu

## ABSTRACT

Information Systems (IS) are increasingly being deployed across multiple departments, organizations, countries and world regions. Consequently, the quality of technical and non-technical integration of various IS modules is highly related to the tangible outcomes and, therefore, to firm performance. In spite of the importance of the topic, not many research projects specifically focusing on cross-organizational and cross-border collaboration are reported. Thus, the context of this mini-track is the integration of people, systems, processes and infrastructure across organizations, borders, nations and world regions to enable productive teamwork toward accomplishing mutual goals.

## Keywords

Collaboration, non-technical integration, system integration, technical integration.

## INTRODUCTION

Although, many scholars dedicated substantial efforts to fully understand the link between *information technologies* (IT) and productivity, the international context of collaboration process and cross-border integration of various *information systems* (IS) received only a modest attention. Thus the objective of this mini-track is to encourage the research related to this less researched topic by disseminating current findings.

The theme of the mini-track “Cross-Organizational and Cross-Border IS/IT Collaboration” is the integration of people, systems, processes and infrastructure across organizations, borders, nations and world regions to enable productive teamwork toward accomplishing mutual goals.

Even though this mini-track has never been offered at the *Americas Conference on Information Systems* (AMCIS) before, we are building on our solid experience in chairing mini-tracks on this topic at the *Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (HICSS). At the HICSS meeting, we co-chaired a similar mini-track twice: at the HICSS-39 meeting in January 2006 and then at the HICSS-40 meeting in January 2007. Again, in January 2008, at the HICSS-41 meeting we will offer a mini-track that addresses the issues on cross-organizational and cross-border collaboration.

The authors of the papers presented at the AMCIS 2007 will be invited to submit revised versions for a review for a special issue of *The Journal of Electronic Collaboration*, guest edited by the mini-track co-chairs. The special issue will be supplemented by other submissions, with a due date of September 1, 2007. (The following website provides more information about the special issue <http://www2.newpaltz.edu/~roztockn/ijec2007.htm>.)

Overall, our past experiences suggest that the topic is important and clearly needs more scholarly attention.

## PAPERS IN THIS MINI-TRACK

The mini-track “Cross-Organizational and Cross-Border IS/IT Collaboration” at the AMCIS 2007 hosted in Keystone, Colorado has five papers. The first paper entitled “E-Collaboration within the dispersed sales force training process of multinational pharmaceutical companies” and co-authored by Florian Heidecke and Andrea Back, examines the collaboration

in multinational European pharmaceutical companies. The investigation presented in this paper focuses on the *information and communication technology* (ICT) architecture and introduces the concept of a *task-media-fit* (TMF) matrix. The proposed TMF matrix seeks to explain the relation between the complexity of tasks and usage of media. In particular, the TMF matrix is expected to be useful for the justification of ICT investments and to improve the communication of geographically dispersed teams.

The second paper, “The Impact of Cultural Distance on the Internationalization of Online Professional Community – An Empirical Instigation,” co-authored by Yuecheng Yu, Nanda Kumar, and Karl Lang, examines factors which may affect ideas exchange and communication in the academic online community settings. Using data collected from the ISWorld mailing list, the authors examine if cultural difference and *Gross Domestic Product* (GDP) per capita are among the influencing factors.

The third paper, entitled “The role of diversity and technology in Global Virtual Teams” and co-authored by Praveen Pinjani and Prashant Palvia, search for conditions and factors that may determine the effectiveness of global virtual teams. Diversity of team members, types of collaborative technologies, and tasks’ characteristics are among the examined factors.

The fourth paper, “The Impacts of Electronic Collaboration and Information Exploitation Capability on Firm Performance” co-authored by Il Sang Ko, Lorne Olfman, and Su Jeong Choi examines the issue of electronic collaboration between small supplier firms and larger, dominant buyers. The results from a survey conducted among 113 organizations and 56 MBA students indicate that small suppliers which proactively embrace new collaborative technologies may obtain a competitive advantage this way.

The fifth paper, “Leader Delegation, Task Significance, and Trust in Global Software Teams” co-authored by Suling Zhang, Marilyn Tremaine, Richard Egan, Allen Milewski, Jerry Fjermestad, and Patrick O’Sullivan, examines the work of teams during the software development process. The paper investigates the effects of empowerment on motivation and job satisfaction of the team members. The authors propose a research model, which is then preliminary tested in a pilot study using convenience sample drawn from student population. The preliminary results indicate that empowerment of teams to assume responsibility for certain tasks may be a valuable means to motivate virtual teams.

## **CONCLUSION**

The five papers demonstrate the importance of studying the topic related to cross-organizational and cross-border collaboration. Furthermore, our mini-track continues to be a meeting point for researchers interested in these themes, which, in turn benefits the AMCIS and HICSS conferences by making them a recognized outlet for this kind of research. Especially, it provides a forum for researchers working on this topic to exchange ideas and effectively transform their reports into journal publications.

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