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Computer Mediated Social Ties and Knowledge Sharing

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ABSTRACT

Understanding social interactions and knowledge sharing behavior in the organizational context is important as an organization's success is increasingly dependent on how efficiently and effectively knowledge workers share information with others. Knowledge workers are increasingly interacting via computer and communication technologies. In this research we integrate theories of computer mediated communication with theories and prior mixed findings about the strength of social ties and knowledge sharing to theorize about the effects of computer-mediated communication (CMC) on social ties and ultimately on knowledge sharing between individuals in firms. Specifically we theorize about the ability of CMC to a) support diverse social ties, and b) facilitate frequency-based strong social ties that hold strong trust – both supporting knowledge sharing. In a social network survey of 70% of employees in an innovation driven organization located in China, our analysis confirms our theorizing and offers contributions to IS and organizational researchers as well as practitioners.

Keywords

Social interactions, computer mediated communication, social ties, social networks, knowledge sharing.