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Doing Experimental Research on Collaboration Technology

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Doing Experimental Research on Collaboration Technology

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The goal of this tutorial is to present a succinct, focused discussion of the best approaches to the conception, design, execution, and write-up of experimental research on collaboration technology. Our goal is to help researchers establish a program of experimental research that will be publishable in leading MIS, management, and psychology journals.

We will address five topics. Each will be considered separately, but all five are related and all must be done well to produce top-quality research. (In our experience, authors tend to emphasize some topics at the expense of others.) For each topic, we will explain why it is important, and discuss how to approach it. We will present a set of issues to consider, and provide a checklist of key factors.

1. *Developing research question(s)*. Our intent is to focus on the process of how to identify and develop relevant questions.

2. *Developing theory*. Every experimental research study should extend current theory. We will discuss what is and is not "theory," the detail needed to define and refine constructs, and how to tell the theory "story" that underlies a research study.

3. *Designing a study*. Most researchers at some point in their career have read books and papers on experimental design. In this section, we will very briefly review these concepts, and quickly turn to their practical implementation in a collaboration technology research study.

4. *Drawing conclusions and implications*. Every study must present conclusions that generalize empirical results to theory. Good studies go beyond their results to develop insight and draw implications for future research and for practitioners (e.g., managers, system developers).

5. *Top-Ten list*. As journal reviewers and editors, we've seen many good and bad examples of experimental research. We will discuss the leading Do's and Don'ts.