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TWO SURPRISING RESULTS, ONE STATE OF RESEARCH REVIEW, AND THE JOURNAL RANKING RESULTS

*The value of IS for exploration and exploitation**Adoption of IS for collaboration**Virtual communities: a state of research review**IS journal rankings: the value of IS publication outlets**JITTA in print*

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The value of IS for exploration and exploitation. This issue leads with a very rigorous empirical paper (Hunter 2003) that should serve as a wakeup call for all researchers who are interested in how IS affect business. In “Information technology, organizational learning, and the market value of the firm,” Hunter uses March’s (1991) theory of exploration and exploitation to investigate the affect of IS investments on the value of US retail firms. The results with respect to returns variation are as he expected, returns variance is higher for exploratory investments, however, with respect to overall returns, the results are surprising. They suggest that, at certain times within an industry, IS investments may systematically waste the firms’ money. The paper raises research questions that need to be answered with further investigation.

Adoption of IS for collaboration. Bejwa and Lewis (2003), in “Does size matter? An investigation of collaborative information technology adoption by US firms,” study patterns of adoption for IT that can be used to support collaborative work

among US firms, e.g., email, teleconferencing, video conferencing, and web-based collaboration tools. They consider the size of the organization and the size of the IT group. Not surprisingly they find that large firms adopt more ITs than smaller ones, however, this finding doesn’t hold across the board for all kinds of ITs. Furthermore, among firms that adopt IT for collaborative work, smaller firms seem to have higher levels of adoption for some technologies. This study should be of considerable interest to researchers for the leads that it provides for future research.

For managers, the subject of this study isn’t idle academic research. With the explosion of global trade in recent years and the increasing reluctance to travel, online collaborative work has quietly moved into the mainstream. For example, the CIO of one of the largest global banks recently told me that distributed projects are so much the norm in his firm that, at any one time, the bank has 200 or more distributed teams working on development projects. IS researchers haven’t paid enough attention to the research that’s needed to support the management of IT supported collaborative work. This study may

provide managers with some benchmarking information to use in evaluating their own adoption of technologies to support collaborative work.

Virtual communities: a state of research review. With Lee, Vogel, and Limayem's (2003) "Virtual community informatics: a review and research agenda," we provide the first installment of our special issue on "The State of Research in IS: Current Streams (Peffers 2003)." We plan to publish the special issue papers in installments as they're ready and we're pleased to publish this paper first. Since the mid-1990s, when the Internet changed the marginal cost of participation, online virtual communities have grown rapidly in importance to business, society and community members. As researchers we should be very keenly aware of this development, but I suspect that it has crept up on us so gradually that we're scarcely aware of it. Many of us are members of several virtual research communities, including informal, casual communities, such as among our co-authors, as well as more elaborate ones, such as our professional organizations. *JITTA* is a virtual community with authors, reviewers, editors and readers scattered all over the world. Hundreds of us communicate regularly through the processes that we've established to submit, review, publish and read papers, as well as outside them using regular email. None of this has gotten much attention from the IS research community. With this paper, this is changing.

Lee, Vogel, and Limayem first make the effort to bring us up to date on what a virtual community is. That's good because, although most of us understand the concept intuitively, we may not have a formal understanding of it. Then they summarize the existing research, classifying it into five "stages," based on (Lai and Mahapatra 1997). There is, surprisingly, not a lot of existing research, but it is growing rapidly and getting increasing attention. Next they survey the tools used by such communities to communicate among the members. Finally, they wrap up with an agenda for new research, based in the five stages. This is a research area where there are still opportunities, I sense, for entering researchers to establish some of the kind of

foundation work that results in lots of citations later.

IS journal rankings: the value of IS publication outlets. Finally, with this issue *JITTA* publishes the results of the survey on the value of outlets for IS research. Here Peffers and Tang (2003) reveal the results of their analysis of the 1129 validated responses to their survey. The survey asked IS researchers to categorize journals by discipline and to rate them according to their value for the researchers and for the IS community. The respondents identified a surprising 326 journals in which IS research was published. Peffers and Tang (2003) allowed the respondents to sort the outlets into IS research journals, allied discipline research journals, and practitioner journals and then ranked them according to the respondent ratings. By ranking IS journals separately from journals in other disciplines, the result is higher rankings for most IS journals than in previously published journal rankings. This should be a big benefit for IS researchers who want to highlight the quality of their research for promotion, tenure or professional stature. Intended to be exhaustive, both in terms of the outlets identified and the respondent sample, the results are easily by far the most comprehensive article about the value of IS research outlets ever published.

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