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Andrew C. Peacock
Dalhousie University

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PANEL 5

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT
FOR ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Panel Chair: **Andrew C. Peacock,** Dalhousie University

Panelists: **Joyce Elam,** University of Texas
Benn Konsynski, Harvard University
Robert Zmud, Florida State University

Due to the emergence of globalized, competitive markets, business organizations are being forced to decrease time to market of new products, increase differentiation of products, drive information to lower levels in the organization and flatten management hierarchies.

Andrew Peacock will explore how these pressures are leading to new organizational forms (variously titled virtual organization, reticular organization, network organization), based on teams, new management and control processes, based on commitment and shared interests, and new software tools (orgware, groupware, CSCW) to support team based work. If history repeats itself, the trickle of existing tools will become a torrent, groups in organizations will adopt different tools based on differing theoretical and operational precepts, and in five years the "Islands of Automation" paper can be revised. The introduction and use of "groupware tools" without concomitant changes in organizational structure and management process is doomed to failure.

Organizations face an increasing variety of options for both formal and informal relationships with other organizations to support a broad set of business activities. Information technologies are clearly playing a critical role in enabling linkages that support these interconnections and establish associations that enable new co-operative and competitive market situations. Benn Konsynski's interest lies in understanding the changing nature of intra- and inter-organizational relationships and the role of IT in facilitating integration within and across organizational boundaries. New forms of organization structure are thus possible, creating more fluid and dynamic organizational interactions.

A common facet of these organizational changes is that they involve organizational forms distinct from traditional organizational structures. To a large extent, the IS organization is typically viewed from the perspective of traditional organizational structures. Is this view realistic? The final two speakers address this issue.

Robert Zmud is concerned with the locus of decision making regarding IT. Robert will discuss results from two recent field studies with some potentially disturbing findings for traditionalists. The IS is not involved with software development, not involved with project development, and not developing IS plans. These duties and functions are being usurped by the business units. Corporate IS groups are disappearing, and IS divisional groups are becoming solely technology transfer groups. Has IS run itself out of a job?

Joyce Elam will discuss new ways to organize the IS function so that IS will have the capability to design, build and deliver systems to support the virtual organization.