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Analyzing collaborative technologies' effect on performance through intranet use orientations

Angel L. Meroño-Cerdan, Pedro Soto-Acosta and Carolina López-Nicolás
University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to focus on studying the impact of collaborative technologies on firm performance. The methodology used analyzes the influence of collaborative technologies not only directly but through an intermediary variable. This variable represents different intranet use orientations (e-information, e-communication and e-transaction).

Design/methodology/approach – A structured questionnaire consisting of close-ended questions was developed. Face-to-face surveys were conducted on a sample comprising 310 Spanish firms in May 2005. Research hypotheses were tested through ANOVA and hierarchical regression analyses.

Findings – Empirical results show that distinct collaborative technologies are associated with different intranet use orientations and demonstrate there is a positive relationship between e-information and organizational performance. That is, the use of collaborative technologies with an informational orientation contributes to increased organizational performance. In addition, the existence of complementarities between e-information and e-communication were found. Thus, firms using collaborative technologies for e-information in conjunction with e-communication achieve better performance. The collaborative technology that has the greatest impact on firm performance is in fact the less employed.

Originality/value – This study confirms collaborative technologies are oriented to different, but compatible, uses. However, only certain uses present complementarities and have a direct impact on firm performance.

Keywords Intranets, Organizational performance, Information management

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Information technologies (ITs) enable companies to obtain, process, stock and share information and knowledge. The emerging powerful systems, such as an intranet, allow people to collaborate and share their complementary knowledge (Bhatt *et al.*, 2005). Current developments of internet technologies and e-business models have provided workable infrastructures for group communication and information processing (Cai, 2005). Put it simply, e-collaboration is collaboration among individuals engaged in a common task using electronic technologies (Dasgupta *et al.*, 2002). E-collaboration and collaborative technologies bring geographically dispersed teams together for virtual meetings across great distances. This results in tremendous time and cost saving, greatly decreased travel requirements, faster and better decision-making and improved communication flows throughout the organization (Bafoutsou and Mentzas, 2002), thus improving productivity, quality, and efficiency of

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