

Introduction to the Minitrack on Information Systems in Global Business

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Introduction

A global business represents a complex network of communication, coordination, and decision making. Information and telecommunication technologies (IT) play crucial roles in the organization and management of global businesses. In some cases information systems are enabling fundamental shifts in the structure of global markets. Recognizing the importance of the link between IT and structure, this minitrack brings together researchers and practitioners from the areas of information systems and organizational strategy and design with an interest on international issues. It considers the increasingly important interaction between the globalization of business, structural changes in global markets, and the impact of information systems.

Business Context

The globalization of markets and organizations has occurred in parallel with the development of advanced information and communications technologies, and it is their inter-relationships which are of fundamental importance. There is a clear trend in most types of markets of a move towards internationalization of commerce which represents a departure from national forms of organization and control. However, it is not clear how or why particular types of organizational development are occurring, and how this is related to advances in information systems and market change. It appears that in general there is increased instability and that the rates of change are and will continue to be high.

Current Theory

There is a divergence of approaches ranging from economic theory, organizational behavior, technological determinism and marketing strategy. Explanations about the formation of global markets similarly span a broad continuum from totally homogeneous markets to fragmented heterogeneous markets. There is also disagreement on the role and impact of information technology in these related phenomena.

Contribution of Mini-Track

Although the outcomes are unclear, there is broad agreement about the importance of the themes market globalization, deregulation, firm strategy and IT. The papers in this minitrack reflect the theoretical and empirical diversity. However, the immediate impact of IT on the financial services sector is borne out by the concentration of research in banking, accounting and financial services.

In his paper, "IT Management in Global Manufacturing Companies: Multifactor Productivity as a New IT-Controlling Instrument" Kai Reimers discusses the use of the "multifactor productivity" concept to model decision interdependencies among national subsidiaries of a global organization and to derive IT policies.

Moving to the industry of international accounting and auditing, Pascal Sieber and Joachim Griese, "Virtual Organizing as a Strategy for the 'Big Six' to Stay Competitive in a Global Market," investigate the extent to