

Chair's Introduction to the Minitrack

Moving the Organization to Convergent Technologies

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Organizations are constantly coping with new technologies...around strategic uses, competitive advantage, and organizational readiness. e-Business models, strategic partnership alliances, technology-focused solutions, IT staffing, and development methodologies are all part of an evolving organizational model needed to capitalize on fast moving information technologies. Convergent technologies are defined in the industry as technologies that are "coming together", in terms of assimilation and acceptance.

This minitrack examines convergent technologies by looking at two streams of research: (1) horizontal technologies and (2) emerging "wave" technologies. Horizontal technologies are those that are used across all areas of the organization, such as e-business, storage, security, and networking; while emerging technologies are rolling in as "waves" and it is important to predict new technology waves as well as to anticipate organizational changes around the advantageous opportunities created by these waves.

There are two papers presented in this minitrack. The first paper is entitled, "Implementing User-Centered Design into a Software Development Organization – a Subcultural Analysis" by Netta Iivari and Pekka Abrahamsson, both of the University of Oulu, Finland. This paper delves into the development methodology aspects of the quality characteristics of the software component, focusing on the usability construct. Examined is the organizational subculture set comprised of (1) usability specialists, (2) software engineers, and (3) managers. The authors found a misalignment in the views and expectations within the subcultural that had profound impacts on both the implementation of convergent systems as well as subsequent utilization. The authors used a discourse analytic approach to focus on different types of language use and recommend improvement initiatives to create alignment through early diagnosis of incongruence of views.

The second paper entitled, "Identifying e-Business Readiness Factors Contributing to IT Distribution Channel Reseller Success: A Case Study of Two Organizations," by Donald L. Amoroso and Heather E. Sutton of San Diego State University focuses on identifying whether

certain factors have an impact on the success of organizations in the IT distribution channel to effectively adopt and promote e-business strategic models. The study works with two case firms of different sizes distributing e-business products and services to end-user firms. Four hypothesis clusters are proposed around: (1) e-business service offerings, (2) selling to the executive level of the organization, (3) level of outsourcing, and (4) serving as the prime contractor for e-business projects. The authors found that outsourcing relationships reduces the complexity of delivering overall e-business solutions, while also creating project management challenges. How reseller organizations developed focus around the multitude of e-business service offerings was found to be crucial in targeting key market segments.