

# Journal of Strategic Information Systems

*Special Issue*

## ***Managing Information and Knowledge in Interorganisational Networks***

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The most fundamental difference between a network and an organisation is perhaps the lack of a single authority to define goals and coordinate actions. Although all parties in a network are interested in advancing the competitiveness of the entire network, each party still seeks to ensure its own benefits. Absence of a single authority has led networks to employ a wide array of governance mechanisms such as trust, contracts, and authority. These mechanisms have intrigued researchers in many fields such as economics (Williamson 1985), strategic management (Capaldo 2007), organisation science (Adler 2001), marketing (Hakansson and Ford 2002), public administration (Provan 2008), and sociology (Castells 1996).

Managerial attention in networks focuses primarily on the business aspects of collaboration – what products and services will be exchanged or developed, what investments will be needed, and how profits and costs will be divided. Sometimes information technology is a key driver for initiating collaboration, and IT issues receive much attention. But more often, managers recognize only in later stages of collaboration that they need to exchange knowledge and information, and that they need IT platforms to support such exchange.

Networks orchestrate their knowledge and information planning using decision processes that are largely hidden and laden with conflicting interests between different parties in the network. Knowledge is valuable and is not free; everyone must pay for integrating IT platforms and maintaining data. The critical and difficult task is to search for win-win arrangements for sharing costs and benefits. The inability to maintain agreements about information and knowledge exchange, either formal or informal, will jeopardise the efficiency and innovation capabilities of the entire network.

Researchers in fields such as interorganisational systems, e-business, e-health, and e-government have acknowledged that information and knowledge sharing in networks holds special challenges. Research has shown that many contextual variables affect the choices among relational, contractual, and hierarchic approaches to IT governance in networks (e.g., Kumar and van Dissel, 1996; Howard *et al.*, 2006). Research has also shown that networks typically evolve through different stages, and that decision-making approaches may differ depending on the stage (e.g., Volkoff *et al.* 1999; Kurnia and Johnston 2000; Andersson *et al.* 2008). Further research on this topic is, however, clearly needed.

This special issue focuses on the IS decision-making processes in interorganisational networks. Submitted papers should emphasise the managerial processes networks use to coordinate and control the exchange of knowledge and information within the network. Key management issues that the papers could address include but are not limited to:

- How do organisations agree upon the sharing of business information and knowledge?
- How do they make joint decisions on IT investments, standards, and other IT-related collaborations to support the exchange of information and knowledge?
- How are these decisions aligned with the broader network-level business agreements and strategies?
- What roles do trust, contracts, and power play in agreeing to knowledge and information exchange and enforcing such decisions?
- How can network champions promote trust and sharing of knowledge during network relationships?
- How do contextual variables inside and outside the network influence the negotiation processes and outcomes?

We will consider all types of papers that clearly contribute to the research on information and knowledge exchange in interorganisational networks. However, papers that contribute to the managerial aspects of the topic will take priority in the review process.

We welcome empirical papers that test existing theories or build new ones: variance theories that explain success of knowledge exchange in different types of networks, or process theories that explain how the exchange of information and knowledge evolves in individual networks (Markus and Robey 1988). We also welcome papers that draw from different background theories and/or summarise theories and results from prior research on interorganisational systems and IT governance in networks.

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## Important Dates:

January 31, 2010	Submissions due
March 2010	Initial screening decisions sent to authors
May 2010	Review decisions (first round)
September 2010	Revised papers due
January 2011	Review decisions (second round)
May 2011	Revised papers due
August 2011	Final decisions

**Instructions for Submission**

Authors should follow the Guide for Authors and submission guidelines for the journal at the journal's Web site, <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jsis>. Choose "*SI: Interorganisational Networks*" as the paper type in the online submission system.

Please contact the Special Issue Guest Editors if you have questions or require further submission instructions.