
A special note of thanks

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Dear readers,

I wish to express special thanks to Dr. Mohammed Dorgham, the previous Editor-in-Chief of IJNVO and his editorial team. It is indeed a great honour and privilege to be able to take over as IJNVO's new Editor-in-Chief. My task has been made so much easier because Dr. Dorgham and his team have given us such a great journal and I am fully aware of the tremendous effort they have collectively invested in making IJNVO what it is today.

Twenty-first century organisations need fast, efficient and flexible services to meet the external demands and challenges of today's dynamic and complex business environment. The expectations of customers are increasing at the same rate as information and communication innovations in the marketplace. Traditional organisation structures and business models are no longer able to deliver products and services when they are required nor how they are required. Organisations are frantically changing their design, business models and strategies to reach global customers (Wingenroth, 1999). Further, enterprises are challenged to do things faster, better, and more cost-effectively in order to remain competitive (Hoven, 2001). The panaceas organisations are turning to are technology, Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), and more specifically electronic commerce (e-commerce).

E-commerce represents the most radical force of change that nations have encountered since the Industrial Revolution. It is not just transforming the entire economy, and changing traditional business models, but it is also having a significant impact on revenue streams, customer bases and supply chains. The number of organisations offering e-commerce solutions is growing exponentially each year. Without a doubt, e-commerce will no longer be a choice for organisations rather it will be a competitive necessity to ensure business prosperity. As e-commerce grows and matures more and more attention must be paid to networks and virtual organisations that web technologies are enabling and necessitating.

Today's new web technologies provide tools to employees as well as to customers and suppliers that facilitate easy access to information and knowledge stored in organisations' knowledge bases. As a result, there is a strong need to share knowledge in a way that makes it easier for individuals, teams, and enterprises to work together to effectively contribute to an enterprise's success in an increasingly global and competitive economy (Hoven, 2001). To be successful, organisations need their information systems and knowledge management to work cohesively to offer appropriate e-commerce solutions. Many studies show that knowledge management has become crucial for organisations (Ruppel and Harrington, 2001). One of the most valuable resources available to today's organisations include human skills, expertise, and relationships. Thus, organisations, even or especially virtual organisations, need to capitalise on this

wealth of expertise. But to do so effectively, requires mechanisms to document knowledge and augment centralised knowledge bases (Hansen and Oetinger, 2001). Knowledge Management (KM) is concerned with capitalising on these precious assets (Duffy, 2001). But despite any organisations' willingness to embrace the necessary changes, key difficulties lie in the fact that required systems should be integrated into one. At the root of this problem is often the lack of an appropriate IT architecture or good e-commerce software that can enable organisations to offer online products and services as well as integrate their business processes and supply chains within and with their collaborators or partners in a perfect, seamless manner. Hence, contemporary organisations typically find themselves ill equipped to offer appropriate e-commerce solutions or even design and support let alone sustain required networks and virtual organisations because of a multiplicity of deficiencies spanning technical issues through to behavioural and people considerations.

Mastery of these vital socio-technical challenges is paramount if organisations are to survive and thrive in current dynamic and complex environments. Hence, this is a very exciting time both for research and practice as we develop theories and then implement and test our ideas in order to realise superior integrated networks and virtual organisations.

Together with my international editorial board I look forward to advancing the research in this multi-disciplinary area. Moreover, as this journal is a forum for disseminating critical knowledge within this domain, I look forward to hearing from you, our readers, if you have any thoughts or ideas on other aspects that you would like to see included. I close by encouraging all of us to engage in good research and above all to enjoy our work and discoveries in this way we shall truly be able to show our appreciation to Dr. Dorgham and his team.

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