
Editorial

Latif Al-Hakim*

Faculty of Business
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba, Queensland 4350, Australia
E-mail: hakim@usq.edu.au
*Corresponding author

Rajeev K. Bali

Knowledge Management for Healthcare (KARMAH)
Research Subgroup
Biomedical Computing and Engineering Technologies (BIOCORE)
Applied Research Group
Faculty of Engineering and Computing
Coventry University
Priory Street, Coventry
West Midlands CV1 5FB, UK
E-mail: r.bali@ieee.org

Nilmini Wickramasinghe

Centre for the Management of Medical Technology (CMMT)
Stuart School of Business
Illinois Institute of Technology
565 W Adams St., Suite 406
Chicago, IL 60661, USA
E-mail: nilmini@stuart.iit.edu

Bibliographical notes: Latif Al-Hakim lectures in management in the Faculty of Business at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. His experience spans industry, research and development and academic institutions. Dr. Al-Hakim was awarded his undergraduate degree in 1968. His Masters (1978) and PhD (1983) were awarded by the University of Wales (UK). Dr. Al-Hakim has published extensively in information management and systems modelling. He is the author and editor of seven books, more than ten chapters in books and more than 60 papers in various journals and conference proceedings. He has also consulted to a number of major industrial organisations in Australia.

Rajeev K. Bali is a Reader in Healthcare Knowledge Management at Coventry University, UK. He leads the Knowledge Management for Healthcare (KARMAH) research subgroup, which works under the Biomedical Computing and Engineering Technologies Applied Research Group (BIOCORE). His primary research interests are in clinical and healthcare knowledge management, clinical governance and medical informatics.

Nilmini Wickramasinghe, PhD MBA researches and teaches in several areas within Information Systems. In addition, Dr. Wickramasinghe specialises in the impacts of technologies on the healthcare industry and various aspects of medical informatics. She is well published in all these areas having written several books, over 50 refereed scholarly papers and encyclopedia entries. Dr. Wickramasinghe regularly presents her work throughout North America as well as in Europe and Australasia. Currently, Dr. Wickramasinghe is the co-director of the Center for Management Medical Technology (CMMT) and holds an Associate Professor position at the Stuart School of Business, Illinois Institute of Technology.

Jarvenpaa *et al.* (1998, p.29) state that:

[a] global virtual team is an example of a boundaryless network organization form where a temporary team is assembled on an as-needed basis for the duration of a task and staffed by members from different countries.

Clearly, critical to the successful accomplishments of tasks and goals it is vital that such teams coordinate and communicate effectively and efficiently. However, to accomplish a rapid and high level of interaction amongst people who have often never met each other let alone had the luxury of a long and established work relationship, the establishment of trust and effective shared communication systems become of paramount importance. The key question then becomes “how to rapidly develop and foster trust in virtual teams?” This is the challenge that faces all virtual organisations today and therefore, the central focus of this special issue.

We do not believe there is one definitive answer for this key question, rather it depends on many contextual characteristics and circumstances too numerous to cover in one special issue. Hence, we have tried to highlight important areas that must be taken into account when attempting to develop and foster trust for any virtual teams. Specifically, Andre Araujo and Laku Chidambaram in their paper ‘A dynamic perspective of trust in virtual teams: the role of task, technology, and time’ highlight the significance of task and technology fit especially in time critical scenarios. Clemmensen highlights the value of combining various trust bases in their discussion ‘Combining bases of trust development in virtual teams’ while Buche’s paper ‘Development of trust in electronic mentoring relationships’ again identifies important aspects pertaining to people issues and fostering trust. The consequence of establishing sound relationships and its positive impact on trust is discussed in detail in the paper ‘Flow, bridges and brokers: exploring the development of trust relations in a distributed work group’ by Julsrud. Significant sociotechnical aspects are noted by both Ho and Daneshgar’s paper and Striukova and Rayna’s paper entitled ‘Sociological factors affecting trust development in virtual communities’ and ‘The role of social capital in virtual teams and organisations: corporate value creation’ respectively. Finally, the paper ‘An investigation of the role of trust in virtual project management success’ by Mumbi and McGill emphasises the importance of a high level of trust to ensure success.

In trying to establish a high level of trust in virtual teams it is evident from this compilation of papers that various people, process and technology issues must be considered. This is indeed a critical area especially as we move forward in the 21st century and it behooves all organisations to pay attention to the establishment and

fostering of trust in virtual teams if superior results are to ensue. It is our hope that this special issue will not only facilitate a better understanding of the fundamental considerations in establishing a high level of trust in virtual teams but more importantly serve to encourage future research in this significant area.

Reference

Jarvenpaa, S., Knoll, K. and Leidner, D. (1998) 'Managing virtual workplaces and teleworking with information technology', *J. of Management Information Systems*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp.29-64.