Configuring Web-based Media for Communication in Dispersed Project Groups

We studied how project groups in a pharmaceutical organization communicate project content. The project groups are geographically dispersed, and operate in different time zones. In such project environments, synchronous or geographically bounded modes of communication channels (e.g., face to face meetings, telephone) are not always viable options. Instead, computer-based communication media such as email, project intranets and extranets become surrogate conduits for day-to-day project communication and exchange of project-related content. We examined the effect of different media configurations on the nature of content created by the project groups. We found that configuration decisions, notably the responsibility for content provision and who had access to content, influenced medium choice and the nature of communication taking place via the medium. More substantive content resulted when content provision was decentralized and access to content restricted to specific sub-groups. Content providers resorted to superficial use of "openly configured" Web-based media or used email if unsure who could access content, or if they suspected that recipients might lack the background to understand the communicated. We explain these findings by proposing a "triad" of three interrelated concepts arising from both media richness theory and genre theory: content, medium and genre. We argue that substantive use (and acceptance of the medium and content) occurs when there is a "fit" between genre, medium and content.

General information
State: Published
Organisations: Center for Information and Communication Technologies, Department of Photonics Engineering, University of Melbourne
Contributors: Scheepers, R., Nicolajsen, H. W.
Publication date: 2006

Host publication information
Title of host publication: Proceedings of the 29th Information Systems Research Seminar in Scandinavia : Paradigms Politics Paradoxes
Volume: August 12-15
Publisher: Association of IRIS
Editors: Dittrich, Y., Strand, D. L., Nørbjerg, J., Berthelsen, O. W., Bleek, W.
Source: orbit
Source-ID: 191122
Research output: Research - peer-review › Article in proceedings – Annual report year: 2006