

Cross-Generational Knowledge Flows in Edge Organizations: Research in Progress

Dr. Jay Liebowitz, Nirmala Ayyavoo, Hang Nguyen, Dr. Deborah Carran
Department of Information Technology
Carey Business School
Johns Hopkins University
Jliebow1@jhu.edu

James Simien
Institute for Distribution and Assignment Systems
Navy Personnel Research Studies and Technology (NPRST)
Millington, TN

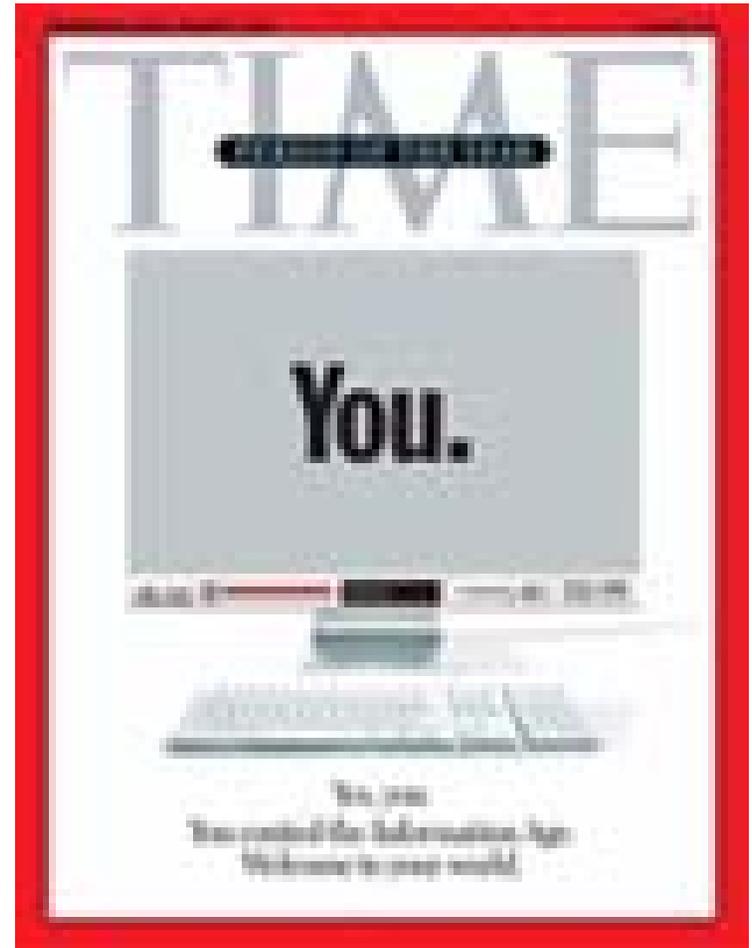
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Some Pressing Issues in (Edge) Organizations

- Strategic human capital & succession planning issues
- Knowledge capture, sharing, application, and creation
- Knowledge flows and knowledge gaps for adaptability and agility
- “Age diversity”

Social Networking & Knowledge Flows

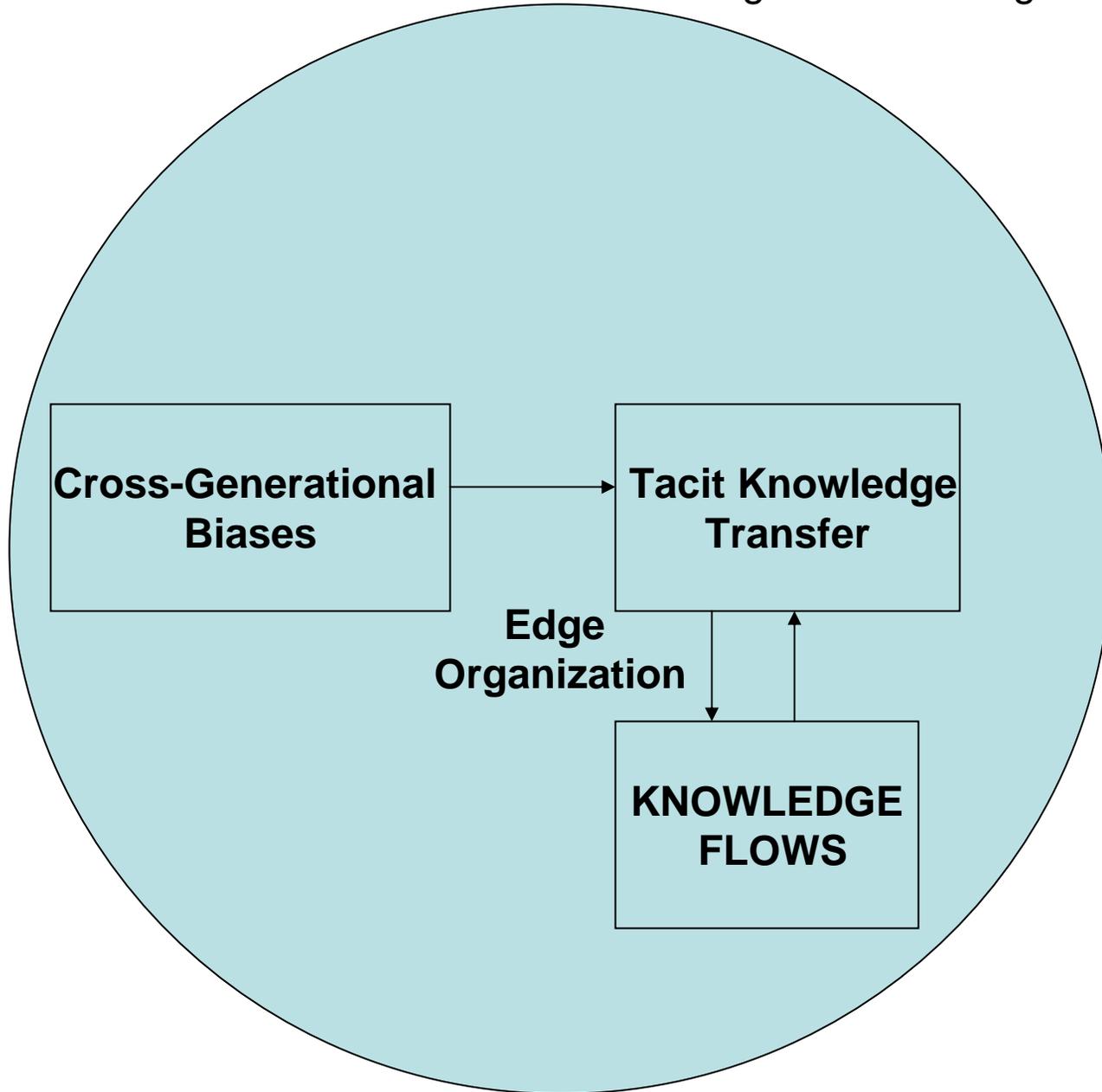
- 1 of every 8 couples married in the US last year met online
- MySpace has 106M registered users (as of Sept. 06)—if MySpace were a country, it would be 11th largest in the world, between Japan and Mexico



Assumptions

- We start with the premise that if knowledge enables action, then knowledge flows could be measured via the knowledge-based actions that they enable.
- We are thus interested in determining the goals and resulting actions that the edge-like teams hope to attain, and the knowledge that is sought to accomplish those goals.

Model for Cross-Generational Tacit Knowledge Flows in Edge Organizations



Tacit Knowledge Transfer (24 key recent references)

- Trust
- Organizational Culture
- Societal Cultural Issues
- Early Involvement
- Due Diligence
- Reciprocity
- Values
- Motivation to Share Knowledge
- Intrinsic Worth of the Knowledge to be Conveyed

Cross-Generational Biases (25 key recent references)

- Loyalty
- Making a Contribution
- Work Values
- Communications Styles
- Gender
- Culture
- Ability to Deal with Ambiguity & Change
- Autonomy/Independence
- Family Values

Edge Organizations

(15 key recent references)

- Robustness
- Interoperability
- Competence
- Agility
- Shared Awareness
- Decentralized Knowledge & Command
- Situational Leadership
- Pull & Smart
- Network-Centric Focus

Ten Hypotheses

- H1: Cross-generational biases inhibit tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations.
- H2: Strong work and family values will facilitate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations
- H3: Decreased communications will inhibit tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations.
- H4: Females act in a more collaborative manner than males, thereby increasing trust and tacit knowledge transfer resulting in an increase of knowledge flows in edge organizations.
- H5: A lack of interpersonal trust will result in reduced tacit knowledge transfer and decreased knowledge flows in edge organizations.

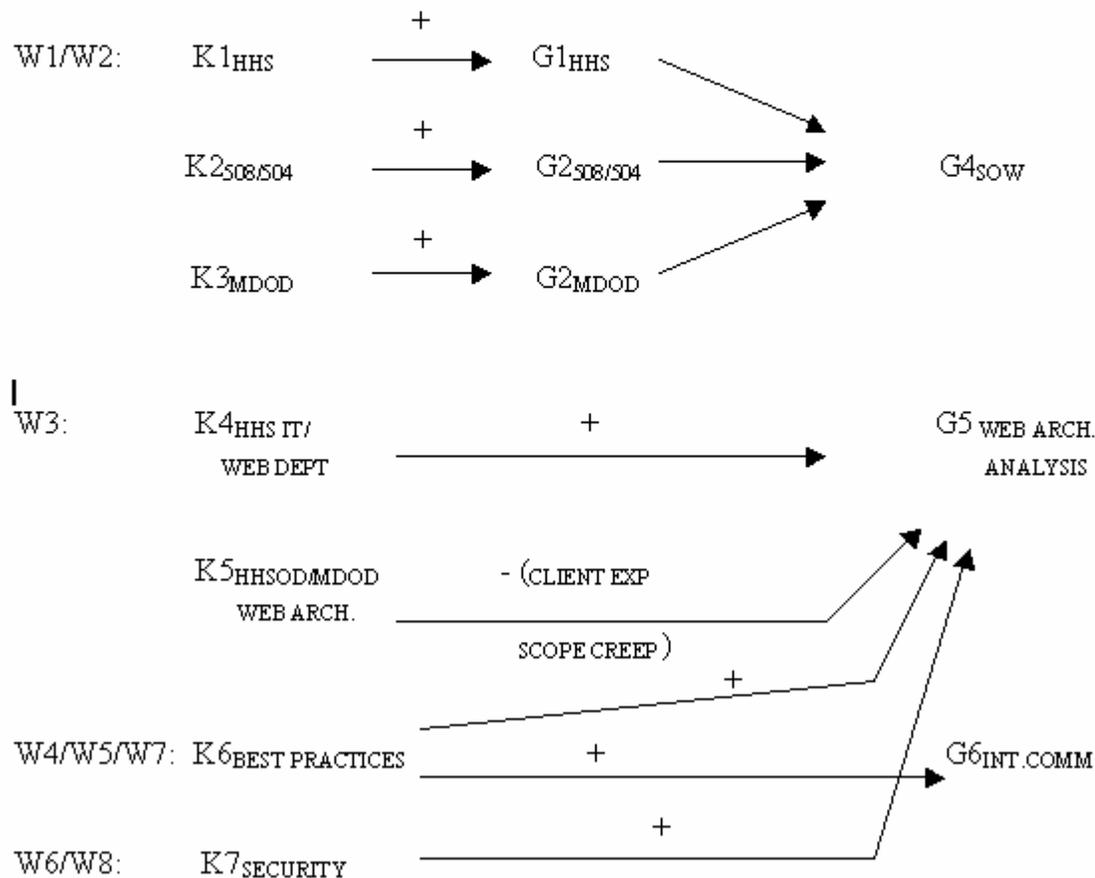
Hypotheses

- H6: Informal networks will result in an increase in tacit knowledge transfer and increased knowledge flows in edge organizations.
- H7: Organizational and societal cultural barriers will decrease tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations.
- H8: Motivation to share knowledge through being recognized and/or rewarded will increase tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.
- H9: Reciprocity and the worthiness of the knowledge conveyed will stimulate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.
- H10: Increased loyalty will increase tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.

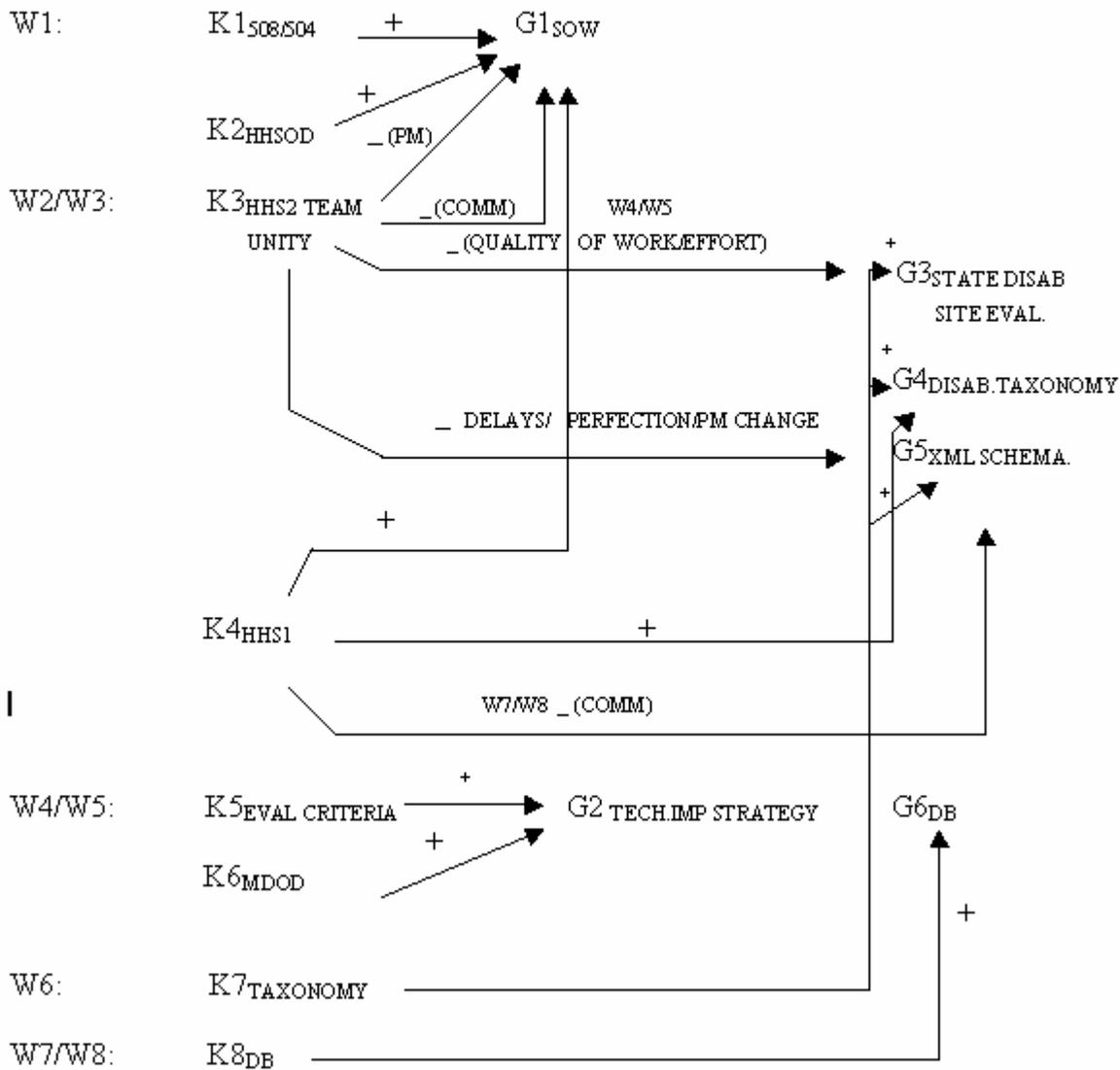
Experiment

- MS-ITS Capstone Teams (Spring 2007)
 - Web-based Cross-Generational Knowledge Flow and Sharing Questionnaire (Pre and Post) (Statistical Analysis)
 - Observation/Ethnographic Analysis (Weekly Knowledge Flow Progress Reports, Weekly Meetings, Use of Blackboard for Client/Team Discussions & Posting of Documents, etc.)
 - Follow Up Interviews
 - Best Practices

UNI-GENERATIONAL TEAM KNOWLEDGE FLOWS



Multi-Generational Team Knowledge Flow



HHS1HHS2 POST CHI-SQUARE TEST RESULTS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS	HYPOTHESIS	HYPOTHESIS TRUE OR FALSE
I believe that there may be generational gaps on our team resulting in different expectations.	H1: Cross-generational biases inhibit tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
I have dedicated work ethics.	H2: Strong work and family values will facilitate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations	TRUE
I have strong family values.	H2: Strong work and family values will facilitate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations	TRUE
I feel informal communications will foster trust and help better sharing of the knowledge in a group.	H3: Decreased communications will inhibit tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations. H5: A lack of interpersonal trust will result in reduced tacit knowledge transfer and decreased knowledge flows in edge organizations. H6: Informal networks will result in an increase in tacit knowledge transfer and increased knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
I feel knowledge flows more easily when people of the same gender work as a team.	H4: Females act in a more collaborative manner than males, thereby increasing trust and tacit knowledge transfer resulting in an increase of knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
I have certain biases that may affect my performance on the team.	H7: Organizational and societal cultural barriers will decrease tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
Appreciation will motivate me to contribute better.	H8: Motivation to share knowledge through being recognized and/or rewarded will increase tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
I am willing to share my knowledge with others because I feel they will reciprocate.	H9: Reciprocity and the worthiness of the knowledge conveyed will stimulate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
I am loyal to the team's mission.	H10: Increased loyalty will increase tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE

Other Capstone Teams

SAMPLE QUESTIONS	HYPOTHESIS	HYPOTHESIS TRUE OR FALSE
I believe that there may be generational gaps on our team resulting in different expectations.	H1: Cross-generational biases inhibit tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
I have dedicated work ethics.	H2: Strong work and family values will facilitate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations	TRUE
I have strong family values.	H2: Strong work and family values will facilitate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations	TRUE
I feel informal communications will foster trust and help better sharing of the knowledge in a group.	H3: Decreased communications will inhibit tacit knowledge transfer and decrease knowledge flows in edge organizations. H5: A lack of interpersonal trust will result in reduced tacit knowledge transfer and decreased knowledge flows in edge organizations. H6: Informal networks will result in an increase in tacit knowledge transfer and increased knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
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Appreciation will motivate me to contribute better.	H8: Motivation to share knowledge through being recognized and/or rewarded will increase tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE
I am willing to share my knowledge with others because I feel they will reciprocate.	H9: Reciprocity and the worthiness of the knowledge conveyed will stimulate tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.	FALSE
I am loyal to the team's mission.	H10: Increased loyalty will increase tacit knowledge transfer and increase knowledge flows in edge organizations.	TRUE

Summary & Future Work

- This research was novel in that the combination of inter-generational differences, tacit knowledge transfer, and edge organizations had never been studied
- Study Limitations: Sample size, in-depth case studies
- Follow-on Work: (1) How does the type of knowledge sought affect the influence of cross-generational biases on knowledge flows in edge-like teams? and (2) What are the CSFs that determine whether edge-like teams will be productive in terms of cross-generational knowledge flows?

Questions and Answers

