

1988

PANEL 4 ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE INFORMATION AGE

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Recommended Citation

Alavi, Maryam, "PANEL 4 ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE INFORMATION AGE" (1988). *ICIS 1988 Proceedings*. 19.

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PANEL 4

ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Panel Chair: Maryam Alavi, University of Houston and The International Center for Information Technologies

Panelists: Peter G. W. Keen, Executive Director, ICIT
David Sutherland, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

PANEL OVERVIEW

The issues addressed by this panel are complex but urgent. Large multinational companies and public agencies are reaching a limit of structural complexity but not of growth. This is evidenced by increases in layers of management and staff, administrative overhead, and more formal control and reporting systems. Redesign of organizations via information technologies offers the chance to create or restore organizational simplicity. Furthermore, information technologies can provide an opportunity for creating organizational structures that are more adaptive, responsive, and flexible. This will be essential for any organization to be able to deal with increasing environmental turbulence in terms of intense cost pressures, internationalization across industries, and the breaking down of traditional industry boundaries.

This panel aims at answering the question "How can information technologies be effectively used as a base for organizational redesign and reclustered?" More specifically, the panel will focus on:

Emerging New Organizational Forms

New models are needed for organizational redesign and structuring aimed at achieving adaptability and responsiveness. These models must provide the freedom to respond to increasing complexity in a new business era. Business teams and interorganizational relationships represent examples of new organizational approaches. The panel focuses on the new approaches and the role of information technologies in their implementation.

Role of Information Technologies as an Enabling or Inhibiting Factor

This panel also addresses how an organization's existing base of technology impacts the implementation of new organizational forms. Organizations must become more flexible to survive in today's hostile business environment. This flexibility allows companies to respond to threats in a timely fashion and be proactive in business. Information technologies can play a key role in enabling the next generation of organizational structures by providing a flexible and responsive infrastructure, but, in fact, these infrastructures are often not flexible and have become a barrier to organizational change.

New Paradigm for Study of Organizations in Action

The traditional concept of an "organization" is no longer useful to managers or students of organizations. It is dominated by models of structure and physical identity. New "distinctions" to describe organizations in action are needed. The Panel discusses possibilities of implementing plans for organizational design that involve information technologies.

This panel will enhance the attendees understanding of the issues and intricacies of organizational transformation in the information age.