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# Information Technology Training for a Globalized Workforce – Challenges, Tools and Research Directions

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Panel Proposal

# Information Technology Training for a Globalized Workforce – Challenges, Tools and Research Directions

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IT training research is one of the dominant themes in IS research for the past two decades and has provided a rich knowledge base of tools and techniques to impart IT training to employees (Compeau et al. 1995; Sharma and Yetton 2007). IT training is a critical enabler of information system acceptance and use, because employees who undergo training have higher positive attitudes than those who do not (Cooper and Zmud 1990, Xia and Lee 2000). But conducting business in a global workspace has created additional challenges for IT training professionals and organizational consultants. Training service firms with names such as “Global Computer Education,” “International Training Services,” Training for a Global World,” are becoming quite commonplace. Business Information systems, instead of being simple one-user systems, have become complex, large, integrated systems used by many different employees and require more learning and coordination efforts on the part of employees (Gattiker and Goodhue 2005, Santhanam et al. 2007, Sharma and Yetton 2007). Hence, new training methods such as virtual training, situational learning, and behavior modeling are being researched to support employee learning and expand upon the traditional face-to-face lecture based training (Alavi and Leidner 2001, Yi and Davis 2003, Gallivan et al. 2005, Santhanam et al. 2008). IT support staff also have to play a critical role as trainers as they support employees’ learning process long after training programs are completed (Haggerty and Compeau 2002, Pawlowski and Robey 2004). IT staff/trainers can learn from these research findings that could help them better manage training on new information technologies and cope with training employees in a global workspace.

The purpose of this panel discussion is to cull key IT training research ideas and discuss their implications for IT staff and trainers. Questions that will be addressed are: What must be the motivation, background, and skills expected of trainees in this training environment? How should

trainers adapt their training methods and approaches to deal with this changed global environment? The panel will also debate and brainstorm issues that are posing challenges to IT trainers, but have not been addressed in IS research. This will help identify potential research ideas that could be pursued by panel participants. Hence, the target audience would be IT managers and business professional who want to understand how best to help employees learn and use IS as well as academics who want to conduct cutting edge-research on computer learning and training.

Deborah Compeau will facilitate the panel discussion. She will begin by providing a short overview of the scope of training and learning research today. The audience will also be invited to share their experiences on training. This will be used as a background frame for listing training challenges. She will then emphasize the learning aspect of training. She will discuss an emergent model of workplace learning and its implications for how we view training and learning activities. This model emphasizes the informal and incidental aspects of IT learning, and the implications of individual and contextual differences which influence how employees approach IT learning. Next, Radhika Santhanam, will speak of new trends and research on virtual learning. She will highlight problems faced by corporations in using e-learning delivery methods to train a global workforce and the motivational issues that emerge in this training context. She will provide a summary of research findings and also show how new interventions, such as games, are being used in virtual learning environments to help learners in remote locations. After this presentation, Mun Yi will introduce a new approach of computer training assessment. He will explain the theories behind the approach and the methods for actual implementation in the IT training settings. Using his own study as an example, he will work through the key steps involved in implementing the approach. He will also discuss the study findings and their implications for system design, IT training, and information systems research.

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## Bio of Panelists

The three proposed panelists have conducted research on training and learning for a long time. They have served on the editorial boards of *MIS Quarterly* and *Information Systems Research* and other journals. They are familiar with one another's work and can collaborate smoothly to conduct this panel. Individual descriptions follow:

Dr. Deborah Compeau is a Professor of Management Information Systems at the Richard Ivey School of Business Administration, The University of Western Ontario ([http://www.ivey.uwo.ca/faculty/Debbie\\_Compeau.htm](http://www.ivey.uwo.ca/faculty/Debbie_Compeau.htm)). Her research focuses on the individual user of information and communications technologies, viewed from a social cognitive perspective. In particular, she is interested in understanding what organizations can do to facilitate individual adoption of and learning about information technologies. Her research has been published in *Information Systems Research* and *MIS Quarterly* as well as other journals. Dr. Compeau is a former member of the Editorial Board of *MIS Quarterly*.

Dr. Radhika Santhanam is a Gatton Endowed Research Professor in the Gatton College of Business & Economics, and a faculty affiliate at the Center for Visualization and Virtual Environments at the University of Kentucky (<http://gatton.uky.edu/faculty/santhanam/vita.html>). Her early research on training focused on ways to enhance classroom based training methods. Later, she conducted longitudinal case studies and survey based research to understand how situated learning could help employees learn and adapt large integrated systems. She is currently conducting research to understand how virtual training methods should be managed to train a global workplace. She is also working with distance learning technologies and animations. Her research has been published in *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, *Journal of Management Information Systems* and other journals. She is currently serving as an associate editor of *Information Systems Research* and *Decision Support Systems*.

Dr. Mun Yi is an Associate Professor at Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), and an Associate Professor at University of South Carolina (on leave) (<http://kse.kaist.ac.kr>). He has published his work on computer training in *Information Systems Research*, *Decision Sciences*, and *Journal of Applied Psychology*. He is currently conducting research to bridge the gap between system design and computer learning. He has served on the editorial board of *MIS Quarterly* and *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*.