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Panel 19 The Management of Globally Dispersed IS Projects

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PANEL 19

THE MANAGEMENT OF GLOBALLY DISPERSED IS PROJECTS

Panel Chair: **Roberto Evaristo**, University of Denver

Panelists: **Erran Carmel**, American University
                Marvin Manheim, Northwestern University
                Richard Scudder, Scudder Associates

"How do you manage a project that has one team in Bangalore and one in Boston?" As we approach the turn of the century IS development is still a challenge for most people and most organizations. Why would anyone want to compound the difficulties by managing development across distance, time, and culture?

Given the increasing emphasis on outsourcing and multi-subsidiary IS development, dispersed IS project development is becoming increasingly common. This panel will address some of the basic issues raised by increasingly dispersed IS development: definition, management, and tools. There was almost no research on the management of such dispersed projects until the mid-1990s. We will look to the more established related disciplines of globalized research and development management for some insights.

The panel will begin with each panelist describing, briefly, one case study of a globally dispersed development project. These descriptions will be kept brief and interesting. Each panelist will focus on areas from these cases that are particularly relevant to this topic. This should take from 20% to 30% of the total time for the panel. Each panelist will have had prior access to the examples to be discussed by each other, so they can come prepared for the second phase: the discussion.

The discussion will cover the following aspects: (1) ways in which tasks can be dispersed; (2) key project management problems that originate from a particular project being dispersed; (3) which problems generate researchable questions; (4) alternative research strategies that may fit a particular situation; and (5) possible solutions to the problems raised. Finally, the panelists will also discuss the teaching needs that may enhance the skills and competence needed to form professionals better prepared to work in an environment where multiple tasks may be distributed.

This discussion will have active participation by all panelists and by the audience. This will be accomplished by making available via IS-WORLD a new distribution list, called DISTRIB-L, to gather questions and thoughts of the potential audience even before ICIS. We expect that this approach will raise the awareness and interest on the topic, culminating with an active and lively panelists/audience discussion. This communication channel will stay open after the conference.