Computer Mediated Social Ties and Knowledge Sharing

Israr Qureshi
msisrar@inet.polyu.edu.hk

Yulin Fang
ylfang@cityu.edu.hk

Nicole Haggerty
nhaggerty@ivey.uwo.ca

Deborah Compeau
dcompeau@ivey.uwo.ca

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Recommended Citation
Qureshi, Israr; Fang, Yulin; Haggerty, Nicole; and Compeau, Deborah, "Computer Mediated Social Ties and Knowledge Sharing" (2008). SIGHCI 2008 Proceedings. 22.
http://aisel.aisnet.org/sighci2008/22
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Israr Qureshi  
Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
msisrar@inet.polyu.edu.hk

Yulin Fang  
City University of Hong Kong  
ylfang@cityu.edu.hk

Nicole Haggerty  
University of Western Ontario  
haggerty@ivey.uwo.ca

Deborah Compeau  
University of Western Ontario  
dcompeau@ivey.uwo.ca

ABSTRACT
Understanding social interactions and knowledge sharing behavior in the organizational context is important as an organization’s success is increasingly dependent on how efficiently and effectively knowledge workers share information with others. Knowledge workers are increasingly interacting via computer and communication technologies. In this research we integrate theories of computer mediated communication with theories and prior mixed findings about the strength of social ties and knowledge sharing to theorize about the effects of computer-mediated communication (CMC) on social ties and ultimately on knowledge sharing between individuals in firms. Specifically we theorize about the ability of CMC to a) support diverse social ties, and b) facilitate frequency-based strong social ties that hold strong trust – both supporting knowledge sharing. In a social network survey of 70% of employees in an innovation driven organization located in China, our analysis confirms our theorizing and offers contributions to IS and organizational researchers as well as practitioners.

Keywords
Social interactions, computer mediated communication, social ties, social networks, knowledge sharing.