

Center for Research on Information Technology & Organizations (CRITO)

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Center website: <http://www.crito.uci.edu/>

The Net-Enabled Organization



The forces of globalization and networking technologies are affecting the ways that companies work and do business. The commercial airplane unit of Boeing, for example, is partnering with a large number of groups around the world to build the new Dreamliner 787 airplane. Behind that network of organizations is a backbone of infrastructure for an information-rich environment. In such an environment, information needs to be available anywhere and anytime to anyone who needs it. To make this happen most efficiently, hierarchi-

cal organization structures are needed wherein decisions are made, then information flows up and down and needed approvals can be obtained. Simultaneously, everyone can look horizontally across multiple organizations to build teams, to complete tasks and to solve problems when within their scope of responsibility. With the help of CRITO, Boeing is working to improve understanding of how to orchestrate networks with internal and external partners.

Center research is providing the theoretical basis as Boeing transforms itself into a different kind of organization. The underlying hypothesis is that those companies that are best at orchestrating these networks and at using them to provide most value to their customers will be the most successful. One important dimension of the solution is better understanding what companies need on order to keep tight internal control versus what it can or should safely network. Benefits of this approach are less inventory, fewer facilities and services that are market driven instead of internally driven. Profitability can be increased and companies can be more responsive. In the case of Boeing, airplanes can be built more efficiently. Using the tools of social science and business research, including case studies, interviews, surveys, modeling and analysis, CRITO researchers are working on the conceptual aspects the networked business model and helping to create the processes and tools to work more effectively in these new structures.

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