The rise of the smart business network

Companies are increasingly organizing themselves as part of a dynamic network rather than as an island in a static supply chain. Digital technologies enable organizations to create value through the novel combination of information aggregation, information synthesis and information analysis. This trend, in combination with the reduction of interaction costs and the development of quick-connect capabilities facilitating easy and fast activation and deactivation of interorganizational information systems, leads to the increased use of interfirm networks. Smartness emerges when these interfirm networks embed business rules within their primary business processes. This will have a significant impact on the organization of the firm, on how the firm serves its customer and on how a firm can stay ahead of its competitors. The design, governance and information systems of the smart business network, rather than the individual smart business, will increasingly determine the competitiveness and ultimately the performance of the individual firm.

SBN2008 will combine science and business to explore and examine the concepts and practices of smart business networks under the theme “The Networked Experience”.

Scope of “The Networked Experience”

The Networked Experience concentrates on:

- **Smart**: how business processes are organized within and across firm boundaries to create distinctive capabilities that are not commonplace today;

- **Business**: serving the end-customer in a timely and efficient way delivering new measurable business value in terms of sustainable profitable positions; and

- **Networks**: beyond the static value-chain – a dynamic interfirm network that is more competitive than those of competing firms.

We invite scholars to contribute their studies to offer new insights on the emergence, governance, design and operations of today’s smart business networks. We encourage scholars from a broad array of disciplines, including but not limited to, social network analysis, graph theory, complex systems analysis, information systems, modularity, swarm intelligence, strategy and economic theory to submit their paper.

We also invite professionals from business to share their understanding of why “being networked” is important: and to highlight their cases and personal experiences. SBNs impact marketing and sales capabilities, e-business, information systems and strategy, social networks, value chain dynamics, outsourcing models, agile manufacturing, and service creation and delivery across all industries.

Program

Management scholars and professionals will jointly explore and discover the realities of, and developments, in smart business networks in Beijing. The “Academic Program” will take place from Sunday evening 18 May 2008 (opening dinner) and close on the evening of Tuesday 20 May 2008.

From Wednesday 21 May to Thursday 22 May an “Experience Tour” will be organized to visit businesses in and around Beijing with a view to examine how, national Chinese companies and international companies operating in China are acting to “be networked”. On the closing day the results from Experience Tour and the Academic Program will be presented. SBN2008 will include a visit to the Olympics Committee.
Organizing Committee
Ting Li, RSM Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Diederik van Liere, RSM University, the Netherlands
Ria Visser, RSM University, the Netherlands
Ming Yu, Tsinghua University, China

Contact information
Please email your intention to contribute with a short abstract to admin@sbnibweb.org or submit it thru our online submission website at ocs.sfu.ca/erim by November 31st, 2007

Paper submission – areas of interest
We are particularly interested in contributions within the following five sub-themes and we suggest some research questions that can be addressed:

- **Value**: How do smart business networks create value? How do smart business networks balance exploitation and exploration activities? How is joint value determined and distributed among the network participants?
- **Design**: How do network structures affect the value and performance of the business network? How do firms organize the governance of smart business networks? How are interfirm business processes, execution and coordination designed?
- **Performance**: Which network structure characteristics determine network performance? How do firms measure the performance of their smart business networks?
- **Enablers**: Which technologies are enabling the design, execution and coordination of smart business networks? How are business processes shared, executed and coordinated between network partners? How are network performance dashboards designed and implemented to monitor activity and resolve new situations?
- **Measurement**: How can “network maps” that discover, track, and visualize the customer and the intra- and inter-organizational networks be created and implemented? What must be measured and how are these measurements applied?
- **Business and government**: In what type of industries are smart business networks most likely to emerge and why? Can government organizations gain from smart business networks?

Paper submission and timelines
In the first instance please email a short abstract of the proposed paper (maximum 1500 words) in MSword format (DOC, RTF or PDF) to admin@sbnibweb.org or submit it thru our online submission website at ocs.sfu.ca/erim.

These abstracts will be reviewed by the Programme Committee and those accepted will be invited to submit their complete paper and to present and discuss it at the conference. Selected papers will be published as a special issue in one of the top journals and in book form. The selected papers and meeting commentary from SBN2004 were published in “Smart Business Networks”, ed. Vervest, van Heck, Preiss, Pau, Springer 2005.

- **31 November 2007** Submission outline proposal
- **15 January 2008** Submission of extended abstract
- **15 February 2008** Acceptance decision
- **31 March 2008** Submission of complete paper
- **19 - 23 May 2008** SBN2008 presentation
- **31 July 2008** Submission of final paper for publication
- **3 October 2008** Publication of proceedings (Cordys Cordial)

Tsinghua University, Beijing
We are honored to be supported by Tsinghua University, Beijing, one of the leading universities in China. Taking place in the year of the Beijing Olympics, the “Networked Experience” will give a great opportunity to be involved in and understand the excitement of China. For academics and business professionals the conference will give the opportunity to meet with, gain understanding of, and share experiences and directions with their peers from Beijing and beyond. The Experience Tour will provide access to Chinese companies and international companies operating in China to determine their views and directions on business networks.