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Corporate online communities: The organizational impacts of employees as electronic crowds

Online communities are powerful tools for change, resistance and collective action. However, although there is a lot of research on how citizens use online communities to coordinate their effort, we know far less about how employees use online communities in their everyday experience at work.

Research on online communities has shown the power that electronic crowds are able to gather and use to fight policy, disrupt organizations and empower democratic processes. How do these effects translate to organizations?

Research on organizational change has underscored the role of conversations in organizational change. These studies have shown that organizational change succeeds or fails in the everyday conversations that people have when they seek each other's help to make sense of their experience at work. What happens when these conversations move from small face-to-face groups to large crowds in online communities?

This track seeks to address the impact of employee online communities in organizations. We welcome research papers about employees' use of online communities. We are open to studies employing all research methods (conceptual or empirical, quantitative or qualitative). Topics of interest include (but are not limited to):

1. Creation and implementation of corporate online communities: Papers that look at why and how companies create online communities for their employees. We are especially interested in papers that study online communities that people use to discuss their experience at work, rather than online communities that people use to work (i.e. communities of practice)
2. Employees' use of online communities to interpret organizational change: Studies that look at how employees use internal or public online communities to make sense of, and talk about organizational change.
3. Employees' use of online communities to organize collective action: Papers that explain how employees can use online communities to enact resistance to change and which explore the effectiveness of this type of collective action.
4. What is the impact on Unions of employees' use of communication technologies at work: Studies that explain how unions and other types of employee organizations are affected by the role that online communities play in organizational change.
5. How do managers use communication technologies in their leadership practices: Papers that look at how managers take advantage of online communities in their attempts to improve employee performance.
6. How do managers respond to the challenges created by employees' use of online communities at work: Studies that look at how managers cope with and fight against online collective resistance to change.