Introduction to the minitrack:
Computer-Mediated Inter-organizational Systems

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Inter-organizational systems (IOS) have the potential to affect all aspects of market and trade relationships, including search, negotiation, procurement, invoicing, and payment. Electronic links improve efficiency and effectiveness in markets and other inter-organizational transactions by (1) decoupling the flow of products from the flow of information and market processes, (2) reducing transaction costs by replacing costly physical markets with electronic marketplaces, or (3) improving the ability to audit and monitor transactions, allowing the organization to increase delegation of responsibility without losing control. The full potential of these systems to transform market and customer-supplier relationships is just beginning to be realized, even though these systems have been used in some industries for decades (e.g. airlines).

A total of eight papers will be presented in the three sessions for this minitrack. The first session focuses on electronic commerce and the role of intermediaries in using IOS. Lee (best paper nomination) will describe the opportunities and challenges associated with introducing electronic market intermediary systems into the value chain. Tomoyoshi, Clark and Lee with then present work on the role of electronic commerce intermediaries within the agricultural industry. The concluding paper in the first session will be a case study on Web—Enabled Cooperation in Tourism presented by Tschanz and Klein.

The second session focuses on the adoption and diffusion of EDI and electronic commerce. The first two papers in this session address the adoption and diffusion of EDI, while the third paper focuses on the potential application of electronic commerce diffusion on the travel industry. Damsgaard will present an overview of EDI adoption in Denmark, including a comprehensive model for analyzing the state of EDI adoption and diffusion within a particular country, region, or industry. MacGregor, Waugh, Bunker, and Courtney present an analysis of the adoption barriers for EDI implementation within small business. This work on EDI adoption by small business raises fundamental questions about common assumptions used by many EDI advocates. The final paper by Block and Segev presents a case study and associated research methodology for examining the impact of electronic commerce on an industry, with the travel industry presented as a case example in the paper.

The third session addresses implementation of inter-organizational systems. Only two papers will be presented in this session. First, Sherer will present her research on inter-organizational information systems used for support of manufacturing networking. Van Slyke, Prescott, and Kittner will then present their research on overcoming barriers to implementing distributed inter-organizational systems. In addition to these two papers, there will also be a presentation of research by Clark and Stoddard on an evolutionary model of inter-organizational business process reengineering implementation. There is no paper associated with this third presentation in this final session, but copies of a working paper describing the research presented will be available for those attending this presentation.

For our minitrack next year, we would like to encourage authors to submit papers that examine IOS implementation, including inter-organizational business process reengineering and electronic commerce applications. Papers on EDI implementation are also welcome, but we encourage potential authors to extent work from prior session in examining the challenges, barriers, and facilitators of adoption and implementation of these various types of computer mediated electronic commerce. Implementation of IOS does not always provide economic or strategic benefits for the adopting firms. Although many examples of successes exist, we need to improve our understanding of the reasons for success or failure in IOS innovations. We invite papers for this minitrack that address the organizational and technological factors related to IOS implementation and diffusion, including: (1) technological, organizational, or market structure explanations for success and/or failure of IOS; (2) the role of business process redesign (BPR) in facilitating IOS or creating value through IOS; (3) case studies of companies or markets that demonstrate mutual economic benefits from the innovation; (4) the potential for IOS to transform and create new markets (e.g. virtual or hyperspace markets); and (5) the role of the information superhighway and Internet in facilitating development of IOS capabilities.