Collective Information Systems Use: 
A Typological Theory

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Abstract

As the nature of information systems (IS) has evolved from primarily standalone, to enterprise, and distributed applications, the need for a better understanding of collective IS use has become a research and practical necessity. In view of contributing to this understanding, we conceptually define collective IS use as a unit level construct, rooted in instances of individual level IS use within the context of a common work process. Its emergence from the individual to the unit level is shaped by different configurations of task, user, and system interdependence between instances of individual-level IS use. On the basis of this definition, we propose a typology of collective IS use that comprises four ideal types, namely siloed use, processual use, coalesced use, and networked use. For each ideal type, we theorize on the emergence process from the individual to the unit level and we consider the measurement implications for each.

Keywords: Collective IS use, IS use, multilevel theory, typological theory, interdependence, task interdependence, user interdependence, system interdependence, theory building