

MISQ Archivist

Virtual First Impressions Matter: The Effect of Enterprise Social Networking Sites on Impression Formation in Virtual Teams

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Abstract

Social media has changed the way many team members “meet” for the first time. Due to the increased use of virtual environments, it is now common for team members to examine each other’s profile on a firm’s enterprise social networking site (ESNS) in lieu of an initial face-to-face meeting. This study examines how the information provided in an ESNS impacts impression formation at the initial formation of a virtual team, specifically perceptions of social capital (i.e., relational, structural, and cognitive). To examine social capital perceptions, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) is utilized to understand how not only information impacts these perceptions but the way in which the user processes information to form the perceptions. Toulmin’s model of argumentation is used in conjunction with ELM to understand the strength of the argument presented. Results suggest that users evaluate ESNS information differently depending on the type of processing (heuristic or systematic) and that these social capital perceptions influence preferences for different team members.

Keywords: Enterprise social networking sites, enterprise social media, ELM, Toulmin’s theory of argumentation, social capital, virtual teams