

# **EMBEDDEDNESS AND MEDIA USE IN NETWORKS OF PRACTICE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper analyzes the influence of embeddedness of networks of practice on the value of such networks in supporting the exchange of distributed knowledge. Based on a case study on networks of practice in an international development organization, we found that embeddedness in practice and social embeddedness of networks are both important determinants of this value. Different communication media used within a network of practice are found to influence such embeddedness: face-to-face interaction positively influences social embeddedness, whereas e-mail interaction is a determinant of embeddedness in practice. Online discussion groups have an indirect influence on embeddedness; they provide insight into relevant subjects and help locate relevant knowledge. Furthermore, we found that the use of these discussion groups (a public medium) leads to more use of e-mail and face-to-face interaction (private media) over time.