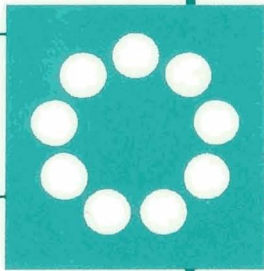


SECOND EDITION

THEORY & RESEARCH IN

SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION



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Communication Apprehension, Computer Anxiety, and Satisfaction in Group Decision Support Systems

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There is a growing change in the way groups make decisions. Organizations are beginning to employ computer technology in an effort to combat the decision paradox of increasing speed and quality at the same time (Huber & McDaniel, 1986). Group decision support systems (GDSS) are now being implemented to try and solve this decision paradox. A GDSS is the combination of communication, computer and decision making technology to support group meetings by making them easier (DeSanctis & Gallupe, 1987). GDSSs are designed to help facilitate meetings and assist groups in the decision making process.

A GDSS works at improving the group decision-making process by trying to eliminate various communication barriers and providing an agenda system that can move groups forward during the meeting process. There are many communication and decision support technologies that can be used in the GDSS environment; some examples are: electronic messaging, network teleconferencing, multi-user operating systems, data bases, data analysis, agenda systems, idea generation (brainstorming, nominal group technique, delphi) and various types of voting procedures.

It is important to remember that GDSS groups are part human and part computer technology (Cragan and Wright, 1995). They refer to GDSS groups as "cyborg" groups. The term cyborg has come to represent part human and part computer, like Arnold Schwarzenegger's character in the *Terminator* movies. The lines of distinction between where the human group ends and the technology begins in GDSS groups is difficult to measure and will vary from group to group.

Organizations feel they can get more out their workers and save money by employing these new computer-augmented group technologies. For example, DeSanctis, Poole, Dickson, and Jackson (1993) report that a majority of a "knowledge worker's" time is spent in meetings and that a number of Fortune 500 companies estimate they have lost millions of dollars in ineffectively managed meetings.

Scholars are rapidly trying to build a foundation for the study of GDSS (Benbasat & Lim, 1993, DeSanctis & Gallupe, 1987, Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1989, Poole & DeSanctis 1990, Poole & Jackson, 1993). While some important theories are being applied to the

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