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ANALYSES AND STUDIES

From Insight to Action: Practical Implications from Interdisciplinary bidt Research Projects for Navigating Digital Change in Organisations

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As an institute of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BAdW), the Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation (bidt) contributes to a better understanding of the developments and challenges of the digital transformation. It thus provides the basis for shaping the digital future of society in a responsible and public interest-oriented manner.

The bidt research area Economy and Labour investigates how digital technologies reshape economic systems, organisations and work. It addresses the economic, social and organisational implications of digital transformation and analyses how these changes unfold across different levels and contexts. A central focus lies on the digital transformation of companies. Through interdisciplinary, empirical research, the research area contributes to a nuanced understanding of digital transformation in economy and work and provides evidence-based knowledge for responsibly shaping economy and work in the digital age.

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Abstract

Organisations today face digital change as an ongoing and complex reality that goes far beyond the introduction of new technologies. This publication presents practical implications derived from four interdisciplinary research projects at the Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation (bidt) that examine digital change in organisations. It addresses key challenges of organisational digital transformation, focusing on structures, leadership, collaboration and everyday work practices. By adopting a multi-stakeholder perspective, the publication highlights the interconnected dynamics of digital change and translates empirical research findings into actionable guidance. With this publication, we aim to support practitioners in understanding the complexities of digital transformation and in shaping digital change collectively and credibly.

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1 Editorial

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Organisations' digital change is no longer a question of future readiness but a pressing and complex reality. This digital change goes beyond implementing digital technologies. Organisations across sectors face the urgent challenge to not only implement digital technologies in their internal settings but also to adapt their structures, cultures and practices to a rapidly evolving digital environment. Such changes touch on how people work, lead, collaborate and make sense of these changes in their everyday work lives.

Based on insights from current research projects at the Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation (bidt), we offer practical implications for navigating the multifaceted dynamics of digital change in organisations. This publication addresses those at the forefront of organisational change – leaders, developers, team members and change agents who navigate the complexities of digital change and seek a concrete, research-based orientation in this complexity and guidance to support their practice. We invite practitioners to reflect on our findings, get in touch with our research projects and transfer helpful insights to their own practical challenges.

Insights from Current bidt Research

The publication comprises contributions from four current interdisciplinary bidt research projects that translate diverse empirical research findings into concrete and practical insights.[1] They provide a rich and practice-orientated overview of what it means to navigate, shape and sustain digital change in organisations today. Each contribution highlights a different facet of digital change, offering impulses for reflection and orientation in practice. The research projects investigate digital change in organisations from two distinct, yet complementary angles, representing two perspectives on the same evolving landscape. The first two contributions primarily focus on the processual and holistic character of digital change in organisations, while the other two shed light on managing issues in digital work settings.

- **Considering the organisational identity in digital transformation**
  (Research project: ↗ Digital transformation of engineering companies)
  This contribution reflects on how digital transformation questions and reshapes organisational identity. It emphasises the importance of aligning legacy and future identity and shows how collective identity work can enable more grounded and sustainable change.

1 The order of authors for the subsequent entries does not necessarily reflect the extent of their individual contributions.

- ### Transforming digitally: How digital technologies support change management

  (Research project: ↗ Transforming digitally: Digital innovations for the successful realisation of organisational change)

  This research sheds light on how digital innovations for organisational change (DIOCs) reshape organisational practices, challenge established approaches to change management and depend on employees' interpretations for their success. It offers guidance on aligning DIOCs with organisational goals, managerial values and employee perspectives to foster more effective and inclusive change processes.

- ### The dark side of digital leadership

  (Research project: ↗ Exploitative leadership in digital collaboration: Resilience for employees, leaders and digital communication tools)

  Focusing on remote and hybrid work environments, this project provides practical insights on how to reduce destructive leadership behaviour, specifically exploitative leadership actions. It emphasises the need to reflect on company culture and guidelines, to improve leaders' digital literacy, as well as to foster a feedback culture across a physically distant work environment.

- ### Digital collaboration platforms as enablers of organisational knowledge exchange

  (Research project: ↗ Digital collaboration platforms as enablers of organisational exchange)

  Based on the study of enterprise collaboration platforms, this study addresses the implementation and usage of digital tools and provides insights into how these can be designed to support knowledge exchange through participation, diversity and accessibility. It offers practical suggestions for feedback systems, user-centred design and strategic governance of digital infrastructures.

Together, these contributions shed light on different yet interconnected layers of digital change and demonstrate how research-based knowledge can support meaningful digital change in organisations.

One Process, Many Layers: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

Digital change rarely follows a linear or uniform path. It affects organisations at multiple levels simultaneously – strategic, operational, individual and technical – and often in asymmetric or contradictory ways. Successfully navigating digital change therefore depends not only on new tools or strategies but on a nuanced understanding of how change manifests differently across various domains in an organisation. Recognising this, all contributions in this volume follow a shared analytical approach that distinguishes between four interconnected perspectives. Each contribution reflects on specific stakeholder groups and their associated levels of responsibility and influence, and offers targeted implications for practice:

- ## Organisation

  Organisations are not passive recipients of innovation. They are active, historically grown and socially embedded systems whose evolution depends on how digital interventions are interpreted, adopted and adapted. The "organisational perspective" addresses the macro-level of digital change and points to structural, cultural and institutional foundations. It concerns how legacy systems, power dynamics and organisational identities shape and are shaped by digital initiatives. Questions arise around governance, participation, inclusivity and alignment between the imagined digital future and an organisation's historically grown self-understanding. Practical implications under this perspective primarily address board members, specialists in strategic planning and organisational development, as well as employee representatives. They provide insights on how organisations can actively reflect on their strategic direction, anchor transformation processes in existing values and create enabling conditions for change that are more than skin-deep.

- ## Management

  Zooming in to the meso-level, this perspective centres on the pivotal role of managers – particularly from mid-level, team leads and change agents – in facilitating, moderating, and legitimising change in teams and departments. In this regard, digital change is not simply about cascading new rules or enforcing compliance; it is about navigating tension, enabling dialogue and creating clarity amid uncertainty. Managers must interpret evolving demands, translate them into meaningful guidance and act as credible change facilitators. The management perspective sheds light on the shifting roles and responsibilities of leaders in digital contexts. Practical implications touch on leadership style, communication culture and relational competence. We provide insights on the need for new leadership competencies, such as digital literacy, reflexivity and emotional intelligence, as well as the shifting role of management towards moderating change and enabling employees' involvement.

- **Employees**

  From the vantage point of employees, digital change is not a strategic agenda – it is a lived experience. For staff at all levels, including informal leaders and employee representatives, digital change often brings uncertainty, increased complexity or shifts in role identity. Simultaneously, change becomes real only when individuals experience, enact and embody it. The employee perspective (micro-level) focuses on how staff members perceive and respond to digital change processes, whether as an opportunity, a burden or a source. It highlights the emotional, practical and social dimensions of change and emphasises the importance of transparent communication, accessible support formats and participatory tools that invite ownership rather than compliance.

- **Technology**

  The technology perspective speaks directly to people involved in the design, implementation and governance of digital tools, such as IT leaders, system developers, UX designers and internal digitalisation teams. In this regard, technology is understood not as a neutral infrastructure, but as a set of design choices that shape how organisations work. Often treated as a neutral enabler, technology involves its own dynamics. Practical implications refer to how tools, platforms and interfaces structure organisational behaviour and how their implementation and design can support or hinder the intended goals of digital change. It encourages practitioners to critically reflect on affordances, user experience and data practices, and to consider technology development not as a separate domain, but as an integral part of organisational and cultural change.

Rather than offering a universal blueprint, this fourfold lens serves as a heuristic to sharpen stakeholders' focus towards the complex and entangled impacts of digital change. It offers practical implications derived from current research that can build a strong platform for nuanced reflection and evidence-based decision-making. Not every article engages all perspectives equally, but it depends on the specific research approaches. Where a stakeholder perspective is addressed, the practical implications are presented with deliberate clarity and actionable depth. Table 1 provides an overview of the perspectives in focus and the core suggestions for practice.

Table 1: Perspectives and core suggestions for practice

	Organisation	Management	Employees	Technology
Considering the organisational identity in digital transformation	Acknowledge organisational identity as a strategic asset and take it into account when strategising and designing digital transformation Align envisioned futures with organisational heritage to avoid resistance	Operate as moderators of digital transformation, not just as initiators Facilitate identity reflections and dialogue among employees during digital transformation	Collectively engage in negotiating meaning and identity in change Use digital transformation processes as a window of opportunity to shape working conditions and individual relevance, instead of passively bearing it	/
Transforming digitally: How digital technologies support change management	Integrate digital innovations for organisational change in ways that reflect organisational values and readiness Critically reflect on how digital innovations for organisational change affect internal dynamics and possibly give rise to a "change within the change"	Critically assess the added value of quantification against the increased burden it creates, and balance data-driven oversight with relational aspects of change leadership Acknowledge the limits of metrics and foster professional development that combines analytical literacy with core facilitation and storytelling skills	Collectively negotiate meanings and expectations around DIOCs to align use with shared values Address concerns about transparency, control and anonymity through active dialogue and reflection	Design transparent digital innovations and processes change that make control and change dynamics visible Build adaptive tools that allow negotiation and human oversight
The dark side of digital leadership	Institutionalise flat hierarchies and open communication (feedback culture) Set clear company guidelines for availability, leadership and wellbeing	Strengthen digital literacy Foster trust-building and co-creation in hybrid teams	Support exchange between leader and subordinates as well as between peers	Design tools that foster transparency and human connection Clearly communicate the purpose and limits of tools
Digital collaboration platforms as enablers of organisational knowledge exchange	Platform choice and design are matters of strategic organisational design Ensure inclusive platform access and usage across diverse teams Support cross-departmental customisation	Provide personalised training to increase competence, autonomy and belonging Implement continuous feedback to guide digital platform evolution	Leverage platform features for self-expression and participation Articulate needs and preferences regarding tool use and platform navigation	Design adaptive, privacy-aware interfaces for diverse user needs Use gamification elements to increase long-term participation Enable cultural and diversity-sensitive personalisation

Making Change Navigable: Implications for Practice

The contributions in this publication offer more than isolated insights. Together, they open up a broader landscape of reflection and action for people tasked with navigating digital change in their own organisational contexts. A central insight across all projects is that digital change always has technical as well as organisational dimensions; it is never sufficient to merely introduce new tools or strategies. For digital change to be successful, it must be socially embedded, meaningfully communicated and collectively interpreted.

Digital change also does not start from a blank slate. It builds on what already exists – on identities, histories and everyday practices. It also does not unfold automatically. It requires orientation, moderation and involvement from all sides. With this publication, we aim to help practitioners understand the complex entanglements of digital change and open avenues on how change can be shaped collectively and credibly.

2 Considering the Organisational Identity in Digital Transformation

Practical Implications of the bidt Project Digital Transformation of Engineering Companies

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Project Information

Project title:	Digital transformation of engineering companies
Runtime:	2020–2026
Scientific disciplines:	Sociology; Information systems
Research design/method:	Qualitative in-depth case studies
Project website:	↗ https://en.bidt.digital/research-project/diec

Highlights

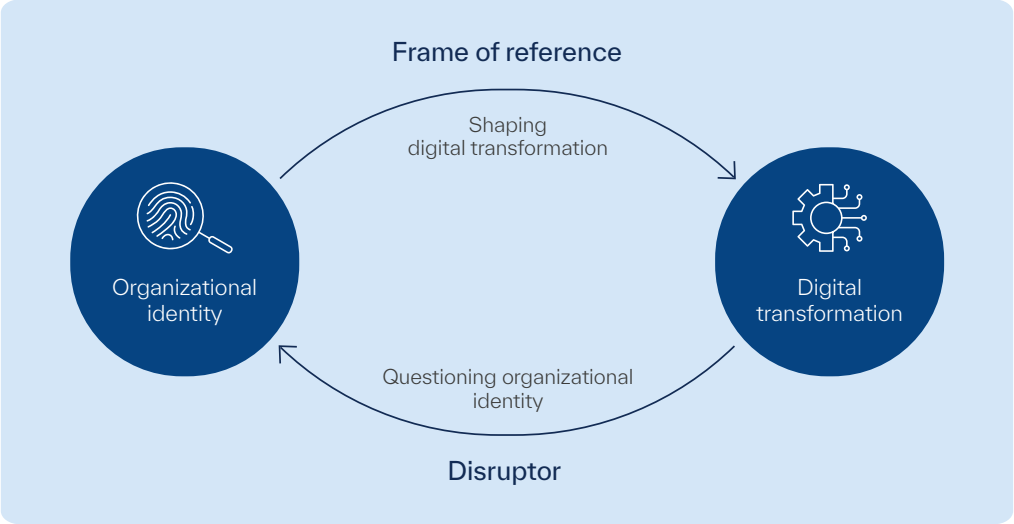
- Organisational identity is crucial for digital transformation to succeed
- Organisational identity must be recognised and taken into account when strategising and designing digital transformation
- A shared understanding of future organisational identity is crucial for successful digital transformation
- Renegotiating the organisational identity in the course of digital transformation must take place collectively and be navigated sensitively
- Balancing legacy and future vision is key to digital transformation

2.1 Introduction

To stay competitive, digital transformation (DT) has become one of the most pressing challenges for established companies. Although DT goes far beyond implementing new digital technologies, it is a profound and holistic organisational change. It holds the potential to impact a company at its fundamental core as it provokes the question: Who are we as an organisation? And who do we want to be in future?

Focusing on traditional engineering companies, this research project investigates the relationship between DT and organisational identity (OI). It explores how DT affects OI and vice versa (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Interrelation between digital transformation and organisational identity



Based on two case studies, we show that OI plays a critical role in the success of a company's DT. On the one hand, OI serves as a key frame of reference and orientation in an organisation and is central for employees' identification with a company. OI is the point of departure from which the potential of digital technologies is recognised and evaluated, and defines what is regarded as relevant, feasible or even desirable. It affects how DT is shaped and perceived. On the other hand, DT questions the established OI and sparks a collective (re)negotiation process about a company's future OI. If OI is not adequately considered and adapted during DT, it can jeopardise the entire transformation process.

We demonstrate that different strategic implementation approaches with respect to the structural dimension (separated or integrated implementation) and content-related dimensions (the distance between DT and the previous core business) spark different ways of renegotiating a current OI, which leads to different ways of OI change. This highlights the importance of considering the current OI for deciding on strategic avenues for DT.

2.2 Practical Implications

2.2.1 Organisation: Bridging Yesterday and Tomorrow

DT is not only a technical issue but can literally become a question of identity. It always takes place on the grounds of established and historically grown structures. A company's history and legacy manifest in its current OI, which not only fundamentally shapes the organisational environment and reflects the members' shared response to the question "Who are we as an organisation?" but also impacts imaginations and desires for a company's future.

Digital technologies open up entirely new possibilities for digital innovations, not only with respect to internal processes but also for developing digital product features, services or entirely new business models. Such changes in a company's core activities often necessitate fundamental changes in the organisational setting on various levels. As a result, DT processes disrupt the established and often unquestioned OI, leading to a need for reevaluation and renegotiation of the collective self-understanding. This can cause uncertainty or even fuel internal conflict.

A critical insight from the project is that organisational legacy sedimented in the current OI cannot be bypassed when initiating DT in established companies. Organisations undergoing DT are confronted with the challenge of aligning their legacy and historically grown OI with their (imagined) future. This requires intentional identity work, a process of reflection and negotiation about the organisation's collective self-understanding, providing space to critically examine existing ways of thinking and acting. Organisations have to tackle the question "Who do we want to be in the future?" prudently and carefully to reach harmony between tradition and renewal, using the existing OI as a fertile ground and strategic resource for DT.

Our study indicates that an envisioned target OI that is too distant from the current OI can cause resistance in a company and jeopardise the DT process. From these findings, we can derive that it is important not to ignore but actively incorporate the established OI into organisational changes and developments. Consequently, it is essential for companies to be aware that DT will partly question the OI and trigger far-reaching processes of understanding and negotiation in the tension between reassurance and renewal. Even if DT challenges the existing OI, it doesn't necessarily require the creation of a completely new OI. Instead, it evolves in the context of DT, depending on how the transformation is designed and implemented. If an organisation succeeds in aligning its current OI to its imagined future, the OI can serve as an enabling condition that supports DT processes. Since DT brings the OI into consciousness and opens a discourse stage, it offers a unique opportunity to shape a company's future proactively and collectively.

2.2.2 Management: Providing Guidance and Enabling Participation

DT is not only an innovation project that is the IT department's responsibility. It represents a fundamental organisational shift that requires ongoing OI work. The question "Who do we want to be in the future?" should be addressed collectively to ensure continued orientation and legitimacy. In this context, management plays a central role, as it must actively shape and moderate the renegotiation process surrounding the OI.

These results have several implications for managers responsible for the DT as well as management in general. Firstly, management should acknowledge that OI development in the course of DT cannot be entirely controlled. Depending on the starting point, whether DT is close to the core business or takes place in a separate unit, different types of change may occur: from gentle expansion and gradual adaptation to fragmentation or radical reinvention.

Secondly, at the beginning of transformation processes, uncertainty often prevails, whether regarding responsibilities or the change's strategic relevance. Differing and even contradictory visions of the company's future emerge among the workforce. These are not necessarily signs of resistance to DT but are often the result of unresolved identity conflicts. Management therefore faces the challenge of identifying, integrating and actively addressing various narratives and providing a moderated discursive space to collectively develop them into a consistent vision for the future.

From this viewpoint, managers should actively engage with their own views on DT and seek conversations with employees. Personal exchange can help to understand different perspectives, uncover blind spots and create a common foundation for change. Communication in a DT context should go beyond facts and roadmaps, but also open up discursive opportunities to collectively reflect on the impact of DT on a company and their own position in that setup.

Management should provide structured opportunities to reflect on how the organisation is changing and what that means for their role, purpose and sense of belonging. In line with this, it is a crucial managerial task to communicate DT to the workforce as a shared organisational transformation that meaningfully builds on existing structures while creating space for innovation and change. Active listening, taking individual concerns seriously (such as the fear of losing relevance) and transparent communication are core responsibilities in this context.

Thirdly, DT may also affect internal status hierarchies if new professional roles are implemented or new professional groups gain importance (e.g., digital experts). Management must not only be aware of such social group dynamics stemming from DT, but also mediate internal tension carefully. Successful DT requires that management fosters trust and appreciation between these groups, supporting the acknowledgement of differences and facilitating the development of a shared perspective.

In addition, it is important to identify change agents at a company. In particular, people who are convinced of the current OI remaining viable for the future mainly emphasise the potential and opportunities of DT; however, they often do not see the need for fundamental changes. In contrast, people who are skeptical about the future viability of the current OI and seem to be more discontented in general tend to stress the necessity and urgency of DT and are open to far-reaching changes. While this latter view may be more critical, it can provide valuable impulses for transformation if acknowledged, taken seriously and deliberately integrated.

Overall, it is clear that management should not merely act as an initiator or decision-maker but rather as a moderator and driver in a process that goes beyond technological aspects and touches an organisation's core.

2.2.3 Employees: Getting Involved and Shaping the Change

Questioning the OI in the course of DT might directly impact employees, since the OI is not only an important frame of reference but also builds the foundation for organisational members' identification with their company. When the established OI is challenged or dismantled, employees may experience disorientation, fear or a loss of their organisational bond. To mitigate such tensions, employees should be actively involved. Employees are not passive recipients of DT but make it possible and bring it to life in the first place. A successful DT depends on employees' ability to see themselves as part of a shared journey into an organisation's digital future.

Since DT shakes and questions an organisation's established order, probably accompanied by uncertainty, fear or even resistant behaviour from employees, this situation opens a window of opportunity to reflect and renegotiate working conditions in a broader sense. While digital tools and new forms of collaboration fostered by DT (such as remote work and agile teams) can potentially exacerbate experiences of overburden, exclusion (e.g., among older or less digitally skilled staff) or increased control, they also provide opportunities to promote self-determination, flexibility and work-life balance. From the employees' perspective, DT should therefore not be viewed one-sidedly as an imposition. It should rather be embraced as a chance and an opportunity to collectively rethink and renegotiate working conditions in an organisation, moving towards a shared vision and realisation of good work.

2.3 Conclusion

Our research highlights that DT is more than the implementation of new digital technologies – it is a profound organisational change that challenges a company's established setting, and more profoundly, it questions its established OI. Conversely, DT does not start from scratch but is based on an organisation's legacy, sedimented in its current OI. Successful DT therefore requires careful alignment between an organisation's heritage and its future aspirations. This alignment process cannot be delegated or outsourced but must be actively shaped by management and co-negotiated with employees. Managers are called to moderate identity transitions, enable dialogue across perspectives and communicate change as meaningful and legitimate.

Employees, in turn, are not passive recipients but essential actors who bring transformation to life. Their identification, concerns and visions are essential for DT's success and must be addressed through participatory and inclusive formats. DT offers a unique opportunity to rethink organisational practices, structures and routines, thereby collectively envisioning and reshaping an organisation's future. The way organisations navigate this dual challenge of remaining rooted in OI while embracing its development and renewal will critically shape whether DT succeeds not only technically but also culturally and socially. Achieving this requires the collective effort of management, employees and an organisation as a whole.

2.4 Recommended Reading

Graf, A./Hess, T/Hackstein, H./Kiemer, A. (2024): Mehr als Technologie. Digitale Transformation als Herausforderung für die Unternehmensidentität. In: Ideen- und Innovationsmanagement 2024(4), 136–141.

Graf, A./Müller, L./Waltermann, H./Zimmer, F./Hess, T. (2023). Exploring Digital Transformation's Impact on Organizational Identity with an Archetype Framework. In: Proceedings of the 56th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences: 4224–4233.

Graf, A. (2024). Digital Transformation is 20% about Technological Issues and 80% about Social Issues: Negotiating Social Sustainability in the Course of Organizations' Digital Transformation. In: Jebsen, S./Lueg, K. (Eds.): Social Sustainability and Good Work in Organizations. New York: Routledge, 120–138. ↗ https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003306436-7.

3 Transforming Digitally: How Digital Technologies Support Change Management

Practical Implications of the bidt Project Transforming digitally: Digital Innovations for the Successful Realisation of Organisational Change

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Project Information

Project title:	Transforming digitally: Digital innovations for the successful realisation of organisational change
Runtime:	2022–2025
Scientific disciplines:	Management; Information systems; Sociology
Research design/method:	Qualitative and quantitative methods
Project website:	↗ https://en.bidt.digital/research-project/diow

Highlights

- Introducing digital innovations for organisational change can lead to “change within the change”
- Quantification can challenge established change management practices
- How users make sense of digital innovations for organisational change is crucial for their usage and success

3.1 Introduction

The successful realisation of organisational change is critical, yet many initiatives fall short of achieving their intended outcomes. Digital technologies are increasingly used to support and enhance change management – not only in digital transformation projects, but also in broader organisational change efforts. We refer to this approach as "transforming digitally". Despite their growing presence, systematic research on the development, application and impact of these tools remains limited.

This research project addresses this gap by exploring digital innovations for organisational change (DIOCs), meaning tools and technologies, whether emerging or well-established, that are applied in novel ways to actively support, shape and enhance organisational change. DIOCs offer promising opportunities to overcome persistent challenges in change management, such as fostering engagement, improving communication and enabling broader participation. They range from personalised digital nudges and digitally enhanced participation formats to real-time dashboards and data-driven survey tools.

Our project investigated three DIOCs: the change monitoring platform, a system for tracking and steering change initiatives; the digital mindset development platform, a personalised learning platform aimed at cultivating employees' digital mindset; and the employee surveying system, a tool used to gauge employee sentiment and engagement throughout the change process. These technologies are being integrated into change processes to make them more dynamic, adaptive and responsive. Despite their potential, organisations often lack evidence-based guidance on how to effectively implement and leverage DIOCs to support meaningful change. This project examined how DIOCs are adopted and used in organisations, how they influence the roles and behaviours of employees and managers, and which conditions shape their success or failure.

We found that introducing digital innovations in organisational change initiatives often generates additional, unforeseen shifts that we describe as "change within the change". At the same time, the increasing quantification of change management can potentially disrupt and challenge established approaches and the roles of change managers. DIOC developers and implementers should recognise that users' interpretation and sensemaking of these technologies play a decisive role in shaping their adoption and ultimate success. Altogether, our insights highlight the sociotechnical dynamics that shape the use and impact of DIOCs and the unique challenges that arise in the context of organisational change. As such, our findings contribute to a deeper understanding of digitally enabled change management and offer actionable implications for designing and implementing more effective and inclusive digital approaches to managing change.

3.2 Practical Implications

3.2.1 Organisation: DIOCs can Lead to "Change within the Change"

DIOCs are often introduced to support existing or planned change initiatives, such as redefining employee roles, implementing collaboration tools or automating business processes. Their introduction can however unintentionally create a second layer of transformation, thereby not only altering change outcomes but also the dynamics of the change process itself. We refer to this as "change within the change". This additional change can place increased demands on organisations, employees and managers, especially when they are already managing the strain of ongoing or recent change efforts.

Rather than viewing DIOCs as purely neutral or supportive tools, organisations should therefore recognise that they may introduce new challenges or even disruptions. These technologies do not arrive as blank slates; they often come with specific functionalities as well as embedded logics, assumptions and technical requirements – what some stakeholders described as "bringing their own world". This can undermine their apparent neutrality and create additional demands on employees as well as the broader organisation. Employees may need to adjust how they work, acquire new skills or learn unfamiliar systems.

This means that organisations must adapt existing structures and practices and provide the necessary resources to integrate these tools effectively. For instance, deploying a dashboard-based system like the change monitoring platform moves teams from periodic reporting to continuous data-driven oversight. Managers must learn to interpret live metrics and make decisions on the fly, while employees may feel increased scrutiny, altering their work rhythms and priorities. To reap the benefits of such data-driven insights, organisations need to establish a culture of transparency, openness and participation. Likewise, a personalised learning environment such as the digital mindset development platform not only cultivates adaptive attitudes but also redefines learning as an ongoing, self-directed activity, overlaying new expectations onto existing project tasks.

Stakeholders may view such tools not as helpful aids but as instruments of control, which can erode trust and engagement. To address this risk, organisations need to carefully consider the timing and context in which DIOCs are introduced. This is especially important during periods of change, when uncertainty and doubt are already heightened. Aligning digital tools with the specific goals of the change effort as well as with employees' perspectives can significantly increase their effectiveness. In addition, organisations should reflect on how these tools might reshape internal dynamics and recognise not only what DIOCs can deliver, but also the changes they may initiate or require. Organisations can then increase the chances that DIOCs are perceived as enablers of meaningful change rather than additional burdens. In fact, this is a critical condition for supporting the change process and achieving outcomes.

3.2.2 Management: Quantification can Challenge and Transform Change Management

Many DIOCs focus on quantifying aspects of the change process, for example by tracking engagement, sentiment, progress or change outcomes through data. This shift towards quantification aims to make change initiatives more comparable, transparent and open to statistical analysis. While this can enhance strategic oversight, it also introduces new challenges, particularly for the practice and identity of change management.

Firstly, the use of DIOCs often requires additional efforts in data provision. Depending on the system, this may involve time-consuming data generation, data collection or the integration and reuse of existing data sources. In either case, the burden on employees and managers increases, particularly if the added effort is not clearly linked to visible benefits. Additionally, DIOCs can require adjustments in the change processes and practices that require change managers to readjust their professional roles.

Secondly, change managers may express skepticism towards the quantification of inherently social and dynamic processes. Some doubt whether change can be meaningfully measured at all or raise concerns that measurement itself may alter the process in unintended ways. Such concerns go beyond technical issues, as they challenge the underlying assumptions about whether metrics can meaningfully capture and represent complex human behaviour and organisational transformation.

This tension may lead to fundamental questions that change managers must consider: Which aspects of change can truly be quantified, and which require qualitative judgment? Does a DIOC's quantitative logic align with our professional values and change philosophy? How can change leaders acquire analytical skills like statistical literacy or data interpretation without sacrificing interpersonal facilitation and storytelling abilities? Does the technology align with the kind of organisation we are or aspire to become? How might it reshape our understanding and practice of change? Not all relevant aspects of a change process can be measured. Change managers must acknowledge the limits of quantification and avoid reducing complex social dynamics to overly simplistic indicators.

To navigate these shifts, they should foster open, inclusive debates about the implications of quantification. This includes targeted training and professional development to help change managers build new capabilities while retaining core relational competencies. Ultimately, the transformation of change management through DIOCs should not be imposed, but shaped collaboratively, with active involvement from the people who are responsible for leading change.

3.2.3 Employees: How Users Make Sense of DIOCs is Crucial for Their Success

DIOCs are not neutral instruments: while engaging with them, employees actively construct meaning around them and their sensemaking significantly shapes whether and how they are accepted and used in everyday practice. This affects the change process and its success. As our case studies have shown, this sensemaking process is influenced by multiple factors: employees' personal experiences (such as educational background, professional values and familiarity with digital tools), prior organisational experiences (including factors such as past change initiatives and similar technologies) and the perceived impact of a specific DIOC on their work (e.g., a possible loss of control or gaining additional responsibilities).

A central feature across many data-driven technologies that we investigated was their capacity to measure and respond swiftly and precisely to changing conditions. Most employees recognised this aspect and valued DIOCs' potential to make change processes more transparent, communicable and controllable. As a result, many people expressed openness and curiosity towards trying and using these tools, but the enthusiasm was often mixed with concerns. Key dimensions such as transparency, control and anonymity repeatedly emerged as focal points of discussion.

These factors simultaneously drove motivation and triggered resistance. For instance, while some people appreciated the increased visibility and accountability DIOCs provided, others feared surveillance, loss of autonomy or unclear boundaries of data use. Such fears often resulted in resistance to using the respective tools, applying them in unintended ways or resorting to workarounds. For example, some users of the change monitoring platform did not provide accurate information on their own departments because they wanted to avoid being identifiable. In another case, users of the employee surveying system started answering questionnaires strategically in order to avoid workshops that they felt were unnecessary.

The findings indicate that DIOCs are most effective when approached with openness as well as critical attention. Their success depends on how employees balance opportunities for transparency and participation with concerns about surveillance, control and data use. Addressing these tensions through active negotiation is key to ensuring that DIOCs support rather than hinder organisational change.

3.2.4 Technology: DIOCs as Technologically Framed Sensegiving

As outlined earlier, DIOCs' successful adoption depends not only on technical design and rollout, but also on how employees interpret and make sense of the tools. For DIOC developers, implementers and technology vendors, this means that by designing and configuring DIOCs, they engage in sensegiving offers. Reflecting on and responding to users' interpretation is therefore a core task in developing DIOCs. Hence, engaging in sensegiving and providing frames of meaning to resolve the ambiguities and uncertainties that DIOCs can trigger may be beneficial.

Similarly, fostering internal exchange and facilitating open dialogue can help surface concerns, align expectations and shape a shared understanding of DIOCs' purpose and value. Given that sensemaking is a socially embedded process, implementers should pay attention not just to individual interpretations but also to collective dynamics. Technology vendors and external partners who may lack insight into intraorganisational histories and sensitivities should also be mindful of these factors because they can be projected onto their products. Instead, tailoring implementation approaches to an organisation's context and involving employees early on can help ensure that DIOCs are seen not as imposed tools, but as meaningful and empowering components of the change process.

3.3 Conclusion

The implementation of DIOCs is not only transforming how change is managed but is also reshaping change management itself. These technologies introduce new capabilities, such as real-time monitoring, personalised feedback and data-driven decision-making, that can make change processes more dynamic and adaptive. They also bring about fundamental shifts in roles, practices and expectations in organisations. As DIOCs become more prevalent, organisations must take a reflective stance on how these tools influence their internal dynamics. It is essential to consider not only what DIOCs can do, but also what kinds of change they initiate in an organisation itself. Rather than adopting such technologies uncritically, organisations should ask: What kind of change are we trying to achieve? How do these tools align with our values and long-term goals? How can we best integrate them to support – and not overly complicate – our change efforts?

For management personnel in particular it is crucial to move beyond a purely functionalist view of technology as neutral or inherently beneficial. DIOCs are not plug-and-play solutions; their success depends on how they are understood, used and adapted in specific contexts. Managers must carefully assess the conditions under which these tools add value and remain alert to their unintended consequences. By fostering critical awareness and thoughtful implementation, organisations can ensure that DIOCs are meaningful enablers of change rather than sources of disruption.

3.4 Recommended Reading

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4 The Dark Side of Digital Leadership

Practical Implications of the bidt Project Exploitative Leadership in Digital Collaboration: Resilience for Employees, Leaders and Digital Communication Tools (ELDiCo)

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Project Information

Project title:	Exploitative leadership in digital collaboration: Resilience for employees, leaders and digital communication tools
Runtime:	2024–2027
Scientific disciplines:	Psychology; Computer science
Research design/method:	Qualitative, quantitative, experimental
Project website:	↗ https://en.bidt.digital/research-project/eldico ↗ https://www.linkedin.com/company/eldico/

Highlights

- Exploitative leaders are self-interested and destructive when leading employees and organisations
- Non-hierarchical environments, fostering psychological safety, empowerment and trust, are important in buffering exploitative leadership's negative effects
- Digital collaboration tools that do not focus on surveillance but support transparency and team connection may buffer the negative effects of exploitative leadership
- Key skills for leaders are digital literacy and adaptability to employees' needs

4.1 Introduction

Imagine: You are working on an important project from home. Your manager expects you to work on weekends and forgo further training in order to meet all deadlines. Once the project has been successfully completed, you are very proud of the results. Your manager now takes on the task of presenting the results to a customer. The customer is impressed and invites your manager to present the project as a keynote speaker at an international congress. Your manager proudly tells you about this invitation and receives a lot of recognition for the successful project. After returning, your manager is even promoted (adapted from Schmid et al., 2018).

This is one of the real-work scenarios addressed by the research project "Exploitative leadership in digital collaboration: Resilience for employees, leaders and digital communication tools" (ELDiCo). The project dives deep into destructive leadership behaviours in remote and hybrid work settings, specifically investigating exploitative leadership behaviour. This behaviour focuses on leaders exploiting employees to further their personal interests and fulfil self-serving goals (Schmid et al., 2018). This can happen subtly or even in a seemingly friendly manner towards employees. As a result, the leader's negative behaviour may be less noticeable due to the friendly demeanor towards the employee.

In the project, we aim to understand the potentially destructive impact of digital communication tools on leadership practice by identifying key mechanisms. Furthermore, the project focuses on the development of resilience-promoting approaches for employees and managers as well as prototypes for a more resilient design of these instruments.

As the project is ongoing, we draw on current study results in this article, specifically an interview study and focus group study. So far, our findings indicate that in digital work environments, high psychological distance, hierarchical rigidity, combined with stress arising from constant availability and information overload, foster exploitative leadership behaviour. The resulting negative consequences include overload, loneliness, reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions.

4.2 Practical Implications

4.2.1 Organisation: Reflection on Company and Feedback Culture as well as Guidelines

Organisations must take proactive measures to mitigate the risks and negative consequences of exploitative leadership to create a work environment that promotes psychological safety, trust and wellbeing. To do this, organisations should firstly establish a culture of equality and reduce hierarchical barriers. Encouraging leadership grounded in these principles fosters open communication and mutual respect, thereby reducing the likelihood of exploitative practices.

Secondly, fostering an active feedback culture is crucial to ensure that employees feel heard, can express their views without fear of negative consequences, and feel empowered to make suggestions for improvement. In doing so, the introduction of anonymous employee surveys on satisfaction with the leader, particularly after a project or task is completed, can provide valuable insights into leadership behaviours. This enables organisations to identify problematic patterns at an early stage and implement corrective measures before a situation escalates.

Thirdly, organisations should provide guidelines on how to strengthen psychological safety and trust between managers and employees to enhance informal social interactions. These should also include communication of clear policies regarding workplace boundaries, office hours, availability outside of working hours and ensuring that tools and devices allow a clear distinction between professional and personal life.

We also recommend implementing coaching and training programmes for employees, such as e-collaboration competency training or stress management and resilience training, to better cope with virtual work settings. Finally, organisations should critically reflect on their corporate culture, organisational structure and leadership styles.

4.2.2 Management: Increase in Digital Literacy and Leadership Skills via Coaching and Training

The recommended actions for managers align with those for organisations and in some cases even derive from them. A fundamental prerequisite for preventing exploitative leadership in digital working environments is the skill of digital literacy (i.e., the ability to effectively use information and communication technologies to locate, evaluate, create and communicate information). By promoting digital literacy among all leaders, regardless of their generational background, organisations can bridge the gap and ensure that all managers are equipped to lead effectively in a digitalised work environment.

Important personal skills for leaders are reflectivity, emotional intelligence, self-awareness and self-management, which should all be assessed during the recruitment process. These attributes are fundamental in building effective leadership that inspires trust and facilitates strong digital collaboration, mitigating the risk of exploitative leadership behaviour. Additionally, fostering communication and relationship-building skills is crucial, as these skills form the foundation for productive and healthy team dynamics, especially when working remotely or in a digital setting. To do so, leaders could implement virtual check-ins or informal opening questions at the beginning of a meeting, fostering a sense of inclusion.

We believe it is important to establish clear rules in a team about how digital technologies are used. Managers must develop the ability to empower their teams by giving them autonomy, freedom and resources to perform at their best and to foster an ethical, supportive and healthy work environment. Management behaviour must also be adapted to accommodate the diverse needs of different age groups in the workforce. This could involve tailored communication styles, varying levels of autonomy and adjusting the work pace to align with generational preferences and expectations.

4.2.3 Employees: Speaking Up and Giving Feedback to Leaders

In our qualitative study, it became clear that the interviewees did not only hold the leader but also the employee responsible for responding to exploitative leadership behaviour in digital collaboration, especially as communication gets blurred and often less transparent due to the use of digital tools. Employees should therefore be encouraged to give feedback to leaders on their leadership approach and to voice when they feel exploited and treated unfairly. This is certainly not easy, and is characterised by dependency in many leader-follower constellations. It may even seem impossible. Still, we encourage employees to be as open as possible, seek support and voice their feedback. As our investigation is in its early stages, the potential impact of this recommendation however needs to be examined further.

4.2.4 Technology: Avoiding Tracking and Increasing Transparency

Based on our qualitative insights, participants' views varied on whether digital tools such as task management boards like Trello or Asana serve as a resource to make transparent who is working on what or whether they are a further instrument for exploitative leadership, as they help to monitor work status or work time (e.g., Slack or Google Drive). At the beginning of a new job, we believe it is important for the team to discuss why and how each digital tool and communication channel is used to avoid employees' feeling of being monitored. Additionally, technological adjustments, such as ensuring clear communication channels and considering users' diverse needs, can play a significant role in fostering a more resilient work environment.

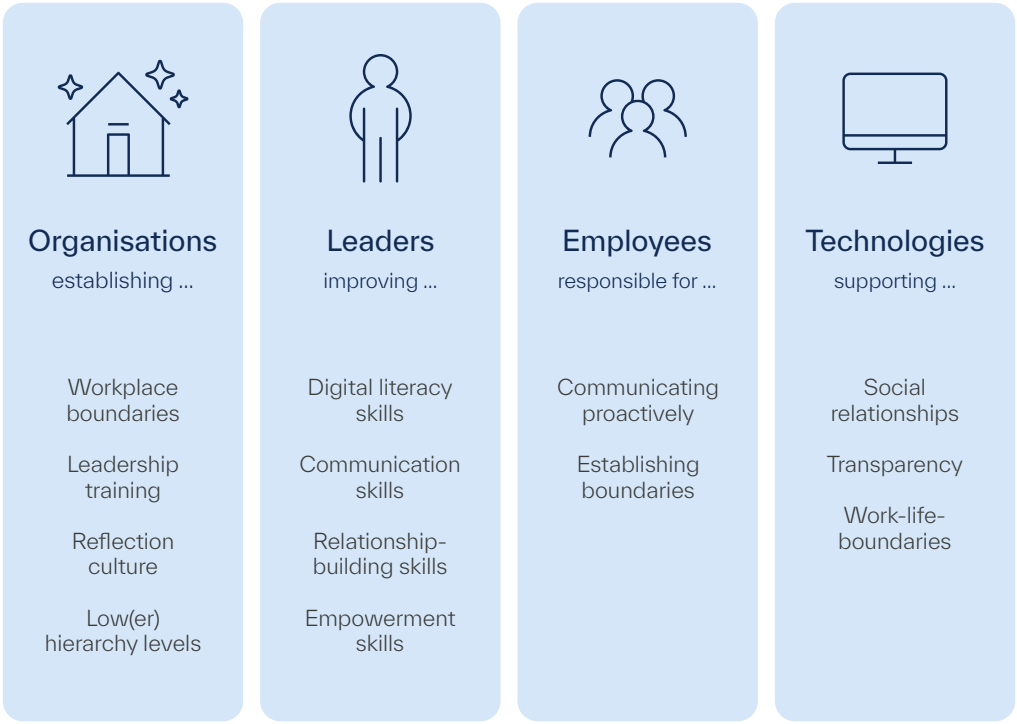
4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that digital communication tools present opportunities as well as challenges for leadership practices. Through the investigation of exploitative leadership in digital work environments – which is still ongoing – key factors are identified that can negatively impact leadership behaviour, such as a high psychological distance between a leader and subordinates, a high hierarchical culture and pressure to perform.

Implications from the project we derived so far indicate the need for action at multiple levels (Figure 2). Organisations should focus on fostering a culture of open communication and feedback, ensuring transparent structures and reflecting on their overall organisational culture. It is essential for leaders to enhance digital leadership competencies and increase awareness of potentially exploitative behaviours. Employees can benefit from training that empowers them to take responsibility for their own work and to communicate more proactively.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of designing digital collaboration tools and leadership practices that promote resilience, thereby minimising negative impacts and enhancing the benefits of digital collaboration.

Figure 2: Potential coping strategies for avoiding and reducing negative leadership behaviour in remote and hybrid work settings



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5 Digital Collaboration Platforms as Enablers of Organisational Knowledge Exchange

Practical Implications of the bidt Project Project Digital Collaboration Platforms as Enablers of Organisational Exchange (DIGICOP)

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Project Information

Project title:	Digital collaboration platforms as enablers of organisational exchange (DIGICOP)
Runtime:	2022–2025
Scientific disciplines:	Management; Psychology; Computer science
Research design/method:	Interdisciplinary, mixed methods (quantitative, qualitative)
Project website:	↗ https://en.bidt.digital/research-project/digicop

Highlights

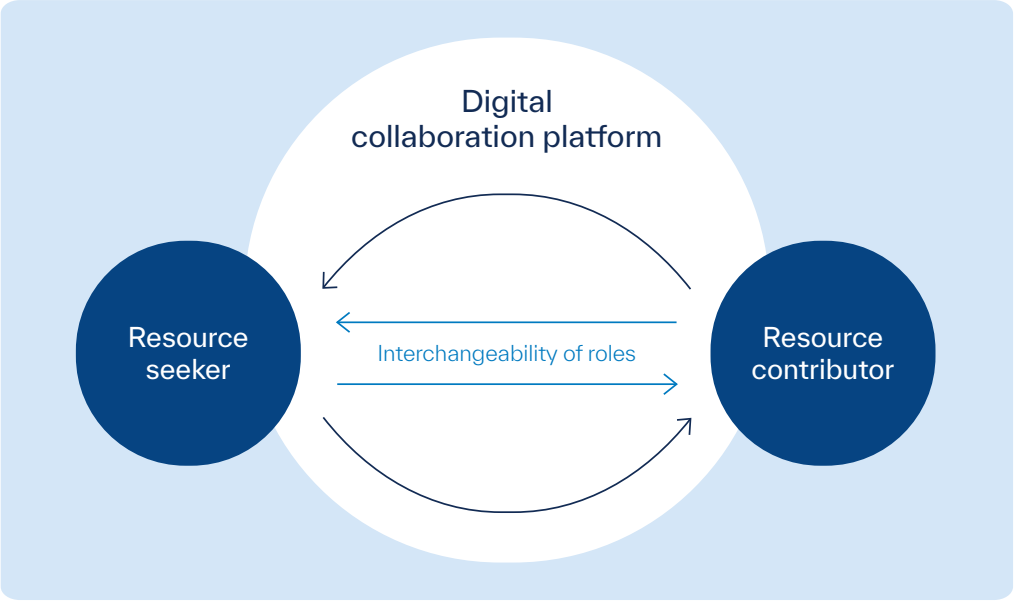
- Personalised, inclusive platforms enhance engagement and meet diverse employee needs
- Proactive personalised interfaces based on cultural needs enhance inclusive and engaging use
- Centralised tools and extended access to shared spaces enable better knowledge flow
- Tested and data-driven platform designs help address organisations' specificities
- Leverage platform technology to overcome frictions and smooth intraorganisational knowledge exchange

5.1 Introduction

While digital collaboration platforms are a core component of today's digital infrastructure and most organisations have adopted internal tools to facilitate coordination and knowledge exchange, these systems often fall short in practice. Despite their potential, many remain underutilised by employees, limiting their effectiveness in supporting meaningful collaboration and information sharing.

Our interdisciplinary project supports organisations in designing their digital collaboration platforms effectively by examining how they can proactively shape user engagement and networking with appropriate features and development processes. Increasing user engagement and connecting organisational members beyond traditional boundaries, such as their teams, aims to support knowledge management and creation in organisations. Such enterprise collaboration platforms provide various functionalities, for example digital bulletin boards, chats, micro-blogging, documentation or expert search that are relevant to sharing, searching for and seeking knowledge.

Figure 3: Interchangeability of the roles as resource seeker and contributor on digital collaboration platforms



In our project, we investigated how enterprise collaboration platforms can support employees' knowledge exchange, either in their role as resource seekers or as resource contributors (Figure 3). In a first step, we conceptualized platforms as passive technological artifacts and the impact of platform features, such as anonymity, on user behaviour. Thereby, we gain a deeper understanding of the relevant factors hindering or motivating users to participate in the platform.

In a subsequent step of the project, we investigate platforms as proactive agents that trigger meaningful interactions among users, such as enabling recommendations and automatically presenting interesting content. Our research comprises multiple interdisciplinary studies in which several enterprise collaboration platforms are observed in different industries. Most studies are published and publicly available for people seeking a deeper understanding of how these implications were derived and how they might be applied in other contexts.

The next subsection outlines practical implications, derived from our findings, from various perspectives. Platform developers, operators, companies and strategic managers seeking to improve their enterprise collaboration platforms can benefit from these insights in several ways. Firstly, they offer a clearer understanding of the factors that influence user behaviour. Secondly, they provide practical guidance on designing platforms that effectively support knowledge exchange and collaboration.

5.2 Practical Implications

The implications we derived in our project mainly target design features of the technologies, users' behaviour on enterprise collaboration platforms and how organisational contexts impact their success. Firstly, we reflect on how organisations can facilitate the integration of enterprise collaboration platforms. Secondly, we focus on how management can support their proactive use. Subsequently, we provide insights into our findings regarding employees' behaviour on such platforms and offer helpful advice to foster their individual engagement. Finally, we focus on the design features of enterprise collaboration platforms and reflect on how these can enable platforms to take on a proactive role in knowledge exchange in organisations. In the following, we derive practical implications from our project at different pillars, the organizations, its management, employees, and finally the platform technology itself.

5.2.1 Organisation: Setting the Stage and Navigating User Characteristics and Behaviours

Enterprise collaboration platforms facilitate knowledge sharing, communication and teamwork among employees. Such platforms operate in organisational boundaries, therefore common frictions such as coordination failures, information asymmetries and a lack of user engagement can limit the tools' effectiveness and added value. For instance, knowledge exchange causes friction when seekers hesitate due to anticipated social costs of sourcing information, platform uncertainty or difficulties around articulating queries.

At the same time, contributors may withhold information to gain a competitive advantage, overlook questions or lack time to respond. Additional challenges include difficulties matching expertise with requests and free-riding behaviours. Organisations can proactively address the friction by providing a suitable organisational setting. In this sense, selecting an enterprise collaboration platform and determining its features constitute an organisational design choice.

Organisations can design enterprise collaboration platforms to become more effective and inclusive by acknowledging and addressing users' behavioural friction and demographic dynamics that likely influence user engagement. Firstly, enterprise platform designers and managers should recognise that users often anticipate social and economic costs when sourcing knowledge (publicly) via internal platform tools. Our research indicates that enabling anonymous knowledge seeking can alleviate career-related concerns and may foster broader participation. Secondly, demographic factors – salient via profile pictures or names, such as age and gender – shape online behaviour in a nuanced way. Findings from crowdfunding platforms reveal patterns like a beauty premium for women, age discrimination and homophily, which may also surface in organisational contexts. The visibility of demographic cues such as profile photos or names should therefore be considered carefully.

From a strategic technological perspective, target-orientated tool governance is essential. It should ensure an enterprise IT architecture landscape that aligns technologies with their intended purposes while minimising diversity. This reduces the need for switching between tools and increases user efficiency during the work day. The use of many collaboration tools, sometimes even for the same purpose, leads to a wild technology mixture that creates confusion and overwhelms employees who will no longer know when to use which tool. For example, many teams use Slack, Teams and Confluence for similar purposes. Companies can simplify user access and navigation through a centralised platform by integrating Confluence or Slack messages into Teams. Enabling interoperability between such technologies can increase usability and user engagement, particularly for non-tech-savvy users.

In modern organisations, teams are typically culturally diverse and often function from different locations around the globe. Against this backdrop, organisations should delineate digital collaboration spaces to meet international teams' needs. This consideration includes group-based and intercultural personalisation strategies that can help reconcile user expectations in shared environments.

Since employees come from different work areas and functions, each with distinct workflows and operational requirements, platform customisation is essential. Organisations must therefore prioritise building flexible platforms that allow each department or unit to adapt the interface and functionalities according to their unique processes. This modular design guarantees that specific tools, dashboards and integrations can be customised to align with departmental goals and responsibilities.

Overall, we recommend a continuous, data-driven development of enterprise platform features. Organisations should continuously test (new) platform features, usage patterns and session data to inform platform evolution while considering strategic tool governance. Prioritising features based on user behaviour (5.2.3.) ensures that the platform adapts to changing needs and usage styles over time.

5.2.2 Management: Design and Implementation of Platforms

The following recommendations are provided to assist in the effective design and implementation of enterprise digital collaboration platforms in organisations. Given employees' varying levels of technological proficiency, it is crucial to implement personalised training programmes that satisfy employees' psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Personalised training starts with an assessment of individual skill levels and learning preferences. Training modules must be tailored to empower employees to take control of their learning (autonomy), build confidence through mastery of platform tools (competence) and foster a sense of connection with peers during the learning process (relatedness). The learning formats should be designed to meet these psychological needs and enhance user engagement with the platforms.

Practitioners are advised to implement effective feedback mechanisms, including employee surveys, real-time feedback, 360-degree feedback and anonymous suggestion tools. In addition, collaboration with various departmental stakeholders in an organisation during design and implementation ensures alignment with workflows, improves platform relevance and boosts utilisation across different work teams.

5.2.3 Employees: Behaviours on Platform Adoption

The use of enterprise collaboration platforms heavily relies on employees' perception and needs. This section aims to help practitioners' understanding of employee behaviours as a foundation for optimising the use of enterprise collaboration platforms. Through our research, we could demonstrate that inclusion must be a central consideration in organisational digital transformation. This means addressing the broad spectrum of individual differences and how these heterogeneities influence employee perceptions and behaviours on the platforms. For example, employees exhibit territorial behaviours concerning their control over tangible resources such as workspaces and possessions, as well as intangible resources such as roles, relationships and ideas. Gender, age and prior experiences with platforms also shape these behaviours.

Additionally, the establishment of robust feedback loops is critical for the continuous improvement of enterprise collaboration platforms. These mechanisms empower employees to articulate their needs and ideas, ensuring that the platforms evolve to meet their expectations. Practitioners should also act on such feedback transparently, communicating changes and enhancements driven by employee input. This approach fosters platform effectiveness and reinforces organisational engagement, psychological safety and continuous improvement.

5.2.4 Technology: Platform Features and Design Choices for Knowledge Exchange

Technology refers to enterprise collaboration platforms themselves as digital tools that facilitate communication and coordination, such as Slack, Microsoft Viva, Teams or Confluence. In this section, we present key findings of practical implications on how such platforms can be designed to support knowledge exchange in organisations. We outline practical strategies that demonstrate how particular platform features and design choices impact and can promote user engagement and support a connected and informed workplace.

User profiles on enterprise collaboration platforms that represent employees' expertise and knowledge are fundamental when encouraging networking and knowledge exchange. Such user profiles are however often incomplete due to a lack of individual motivation. To counteract this, our project has shown that implementing subtle gamification elements, such as a progress bar below the profile picture or on the profile page that explains why each profile field is helpful (e.g., for project matching or expert search), increases user engagement and has a long-lasting effect on profile completion. Enterprise collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Viva or Confluence could integrate visual hints to motivate users to increase visibility of their skills and expertise to other people and sustain long-term engagement.

Enterprise collaboration platforms often gather tremendous amounts of employee-generated content and shared information, such as messages, documents and reports, which can overwhelm users in managing these and identifying or selecting the necessary ones that are relevant to them. User interaction and experience can be tailored to suit individual needs by personalising the platform, such as content selection and interface design. Using emotion recognition or other implicit user feedback, such as conversion rates or interaction analysis, identifies user satisfaction and adapts the user interface accordingly.

Providing additional interfaces beyond personal spaces by installing large interactive displays in common areas like coffee corners or printer stations that show personalised team updates, employees' availability from Teams or FAQs of Confluence pages, makes platform knowledge more accessible in additional contexts, even for employees who rarely use the digital tools directly or support hybrid working teams.

In addition, providing such user interfaces in a semi-public shared setting sparks new challenges regarding technological design: Multiple users must be able to interact and use these interfaces. User groups are culturally diverse, affecting their user experience, which is influenced by culturally different interface design preferences. This culturally impacted perception of technology is often present without awareness. It influences users and their engagement on these platforms, as designers make gut decisions based on their cultural imprint for the user interface design.

Our project demonstrated that considering these culturally diverse design preferences in a structured personalisation approach increases user experience with such devices and leads to more enjoyable interactions. As large interactive displays in shared spaces are a group resource, the lack of responsibility, low interaction duration (as interaction happens during

daily activities on the way as passers-by) and motivation to shape these devices are relatively low, the personalisation considering intercultural preferences should focus on adaptation. Consequently, the device should tailor its user interface as best as possible to users' different preferences without much effort by the users. Cultural models from anthropology therefore help identify cultural differences in design preferences, such as Hofstede's six cultural dimensions, which we applied for the structured consideration of culturally based differences.

We identified a personalisation approach that implements intercultural adaptation for large, interactive, shared devices. With this approach, it is necessary to merge various cultural user profiles and derive a user interface design that considers the intercultural preferences of all users located in the surroundings of such displays. For this purpose, we determined that the fairness strategy would be successful for group modelling, which merges cultural user profiles based on Hofstede's cultural dimension values. This strategy considers each group member's most relevant cultural dimension values, resulting in user interface design preferences, such as colour schemes (colourfulness), content density or the level of detail presented. Factors impacting the strategy's success are homogeneity and order of selection. Personalising user interface design, considering intercultural preferences, positively impacts user experience and leads to more interaction. By considering the intercultural diversity of employees, the enterprise collaboration platform and its (semi-)public access using large interactive displays in shared areas becomes more inclusive and engaging for international teams.

5.3 Conclusion

Designing enterprise collaboration platforms effectively requires an interplay between understanding context-specific user behaviour, thoughtful and adaptive technology design, as well as supportive organisational contexts. Our interdisciplinary research highlights the importance of user engagement in knowledge sharing, information seeking and networking, which plays a pivotal role in enabling meaningful knowledge exchange in organisations. We identified key factors that impact the success of enterprise collaboration platforms and proactive design strategies, such as gamification elements for profile completion, integration of tools and personalisation features that foster user engagement on these platforms and consequently support knowledge exchange in organisations. For practitioners, these factors point to specific levers to increase the adoption and effectiveness of collaboration platforms in everyday organisational practice.

Looking ahead, a key challenge is continuously adapting enterprise collaboration platforms to evolving user needs. This includes monitoring user interaction, evaluating the effectiveness of personalisation strategies and ensuring that the platform remains intuitive and engaging. With increasing proactivity, enterprise collaboration platforms gain more power through collected data and autonomous actions. This may increase data privacy concerns and the need to maintain users' trust in such platforms. Transparency in decisions, data usage and adaptations is essential to sustain user trust. If users feel their contributions are disregarded, trust may erode, reducing future user engagement and willingness to share knowledge. To counter these risks, platform design and implementation should focus on transparency and inclusivity so that these platforms remain trustworthy and empowering for digital collaboration.

5.4 Recommended Reading

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