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Introduction to the “Intelligent Collaboration Support Systems” Minitrack

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Collaboration support tools such as GSS and social software are developing rapidly and their adoption increases. However, adoption of these tools remains challenging, and their effectiveness often depends on skilled facilitators or moderators. One of the approaches to overcome this adaptation problem is the ‘facilitator in the box’ approach, to embed facilitation or moderation guidance in collaboration tools and techniques. Over the years HICSS authors have pioneered and presented many prototypes and tools with this objective. In this minitrack we present next steps in this exciting research direction.

To support collaboration guidance is offered at different levels such as e.g. setting agenda’s or procedures, proposing techniques, moderating discussion, guarding quality, analyzing and summarizing results, creating awareness, etc. The papers presented in this minitrack cover different levels of collaboration support such as communication support, decision and design support and support for effective brainstorming. The solutions presented include e.g. ways of monitoring and predicting collaborative activities, ways to assess and determine interventions and ways of adapting collaboration environments to guide participants in the collaboration process and to alter collaborative behavior.

In this minitrack we present three papers on intelligent collaboration support.

Decision Enhancement for Sourcing with Shared Service Centers in the Dutch Government is a paper about a studio of collaboration enhancement tools and services that help government agencies to explore scenario’s for the design of shared service centers.

Context-sensitive Collaboration in Service Processes through the Integration of Telecommunication Technology and Business Process Management presents an intelligent system to support communication based on a framework of context awareness.

On the Acceptance of Automatic Facilitation in a Context-adaptive Group Support System presents an experiment with automatic facilitation and discusses the acceptance of such automated interventions.

These papers offer new insights and pioneering ideas to implement intelligence in groupware and collaboration support systems. They show that this road is promising, but full of unanswered research questions and new acceptance and adoption challenges. We recommend these papers to your reading and hope they inspire you to further advance and challenge the concept of the ‘facilitator in the box’.