

■ KENNETH E. KENDALL, Feature Editor, School of Business-Camden, Rutgers University

Which communication and social media to use, and in what context, are all factors we study in ecommerce and information systems. Among the newer choices for businesses and individuals are software (applications or apps) for the iPhone and iPad, paired with cloud computing, which can be defined as “computing via the Internet (the cloud) where organizations and individuals use Web services, database services and application services, often without having to invest in corporate or personal hardware, software, or software tools beyond securing access to the Web” (Kendall and Kendall, 2011, p. 558). Experiencing a recent crisis in England facilitated a practical comparison between the usefulness of cloud computing versus face-to-face communication, with some surprising results.

Is Cloud Computing Useful? Not if You’re Referring to an Ash Cloud

by Kenneth E. Kendall, Rutgers University, Feature Editor

When the Apple iPad debuted, I was in England, so I decided to make the trip with just my iPhone, complete with a variety London maps. After all, that was sufficient to keep me in touch with my friends and colleagues. My critically important files were stored on the “cloud” and, after completing an article about Web 2.0 and the theatre industry, I was hoping to get a little break from work in any case. I was invited to the premiere of the West End musical *Hair*.

On the heels of the *Hair* afterparty, it became apparent that we were stranded in London because of flight prohibitions due to the ash cloud created by the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland. Since we coauthored an article about how CIOs and other information systems staff can learn lessons from the theatre industry on how to prepare for disasters (Kendall, Kendall, and Lee, 2005), it was only fitting that we found ourselves in a disaster in the middle of London’s theatre district.

One of the early newcasts explained that all of England and most of the continent would be affected for about a week, although one expert suggested we might be stuck for a fortnight or even a couple of months.

Many people panicked. They took off for the coast to use the Chunnel or to try to catch a ferry to France, and then hoped to get transportation to Madrid where it was still possible to catch a flight. I stayed where I was and waited it out.

In this crisis, was electronic communication helpful? Personally, I was underwhelmed. The airline Web site tried to post up-to-date messages, but I wasn’t able to change my flight using their Web site. There was no point in tweeting or texting other than letting our good friends know we were safe. Before leaving home, I purchased a data-roaming plan, which allowed me to surf the Web without fear of accumulating huge charges.

My FlightTrackPro app on my iPhone turned out to be the most reliable and least emotional form of communication. Based on information from the airlines that I forwarded in an email to www.tripit.com, and updates from the airlines, this iPhone app informed us of any cancellations or changes (there were four delays and two cancellations during this trip). The airline notified me of only one, and the screens in the airport were not updated, remaining stuck in time with outdated information about my flight.

But in the end, I needed to call the airline to change my flight and later have airline personnel help me arrange the final portion of the trip. For individuals trying to get out of a difficult situation, phone and face-to-face communication still win in a crisis, at least for now.

One consequence of our being stranded in England was that we got behind in our work and therefore needed to cancel a brief

See **ECOMMERCE**, page 12



Kenneth E. Kendall

is a Distinguished Professor of Management in the School of Business-Camden, Rutgers University. He is one of the founders of the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) and a Fellow

of the Decision Sciences Institute (DSI). He is the immediate Past President of DSI. Dr. Kendall has been named as one of the top 60 most productive MIS researchers in the world, and he was awarded the Silver Core from IFIP. He recently co-authored the text *Systems Analysis and Design* (7th ed.).

<http://www.thekendalls.org>

that bridge the gap between academia and practice. We aim to influence the behaviour of senior managers, administrators and to influence academic thinking. Our typical readers are executives with a good MBA and senior academics actively involved in practice.”

(Long Range Planning website,
<http://www.lrp.ac/>)

California Management Review

Stated Aims and Scope: “California Management Review serves as a vehicle of communication between those who study management and those who practice it. We publish articles that are both research-based and address issues of current concern to managers. CMR’s contributors include management consultants, policy makers, and senior executives as well as business school faculty from across the nation and abroad.”

(California Management Review website,
http://cmr.berkeley.edu/about_cmr.html)

Although we do not present formal hypotheses, we do propose that the number of articles published featuring collaborative research will vary based on the orientation or target audience of the journals. Collaborative research would appear to be more consistent with practitioner-oriented publications than those that are more scholarly-oriented. We would also expect that publications with a practitioner/scholarly orientation would fall between these two extremes, in terms of numbers of collaborations.

Results

The cumulative results suggest evidence of engaged scholarship in all three categories of publications. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Discussion

This exploratory analysis was intended to shed light on the presence of engaged scholarship in the literature. The results indicate that collaborative research between business scholar and practicing professionals ranges between 5 – 26% of published articles during the time period studied. It also appears that journals that have a stronger scholarly

orientation are less likely than those with a practitioner orientation to report findings from collaborative research (and vice-versa). Additionally, the rates for joint practitioner/scholarly publications are very similar to those that have a scholarly focus. In total, the results suggest that the primary domain for the reporting of collaborative research in the literature is with the practitioner-oriented publications.

Although we cannot, at this time, explain the reasons for the variation in publication percentages, several propositions can be presented for consideration. It may be that collaborative work is more suited to practitioner publications. In this regard, the question is whether it is easier for scholars to adapt to a practitioner orientation or a practitioner to adapt to a scholarly orientation, given that the requirements for manuscript acceptance vary among the various journals. This does not, however, explain why publications that have a joint scholarly/practitioner orientation report collaborative research at roughly the same rates as the scholarly journals. It may be a function of the selected journals and/or the fact that we restricted the analysis to a relatively short time period.

Additional analysis covering more journal publications and across a longer time line appears warranted to further confirm (or refute) these preliminary findings. In the meantime, the evidence reported in this study suggests that engaged scholarship in the form of collaborative research between academic scholars and practitioners is indeed *bonafide*. As such, we recommend that Van de Ven’s question of what would happen “if” we engaged in collaborative research should be revised as follows: “Does research that is grounded in practice, involves practitioners in problem generation, theory building, research design, and problem solving help management scholarship flourish and benefit?” Further analysis of the individual collaborative articles will help answer this question. For now, the question of “if” has at least been partially answered. ■

References

Tushman, Michael L., Fenollosa, Amy, McGrath, Daniel, O’Reilly, Charles, & Kleinbaum, Adam M. (2007). Relevance and rigor: Executive education as a lever

in shaping practice and research. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 6(3), 345-362.

Van de Ven, Andrew H. (2005). *Engaged scholarship: A guide for organization and social research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Van de Ven, Andrew H., & Johnson, Paul E. (2006). Knowledge for theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(4), 802-821.

ECOMMERCE, from page 8

stay in New York on Saturday, May 1. If we had not done so, we would have been either locked in or locked out of our hotel room at the Marriott Marquis, since that was the night of the recent terrorist attempt in Times Square. If we had stayed in New York, we would have experienced yet another crisis and this article would have been longer. ■

References

Kendall, K. E., & Kendall, J. E. (Forthcoming, 2011). *Systems analysis and design* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kendall, K. E., Kendall, J. E., & Lee, K. C. (2005). Understanding disaster recovery planning through a theatre metaphor: Rehearsing for a show that might never open. *Communications of AIS*, 16, 1001-1012.

Future DSI Annual Meetings

November 20-23, 2010

San Diego Marriott Hotel and
Marina
San Diego, California

November 19-22, 2011

Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

November 17-20, 2012

San Francisco Marriott
San Francisco, California