

Conclusion

We do not see as much wide-scale adoption of group technology because the evolution of computers skipped the group user in some ways.

Organizational inertia rather than direct opposition often stands in the way. . . . The computer revolution missed a step. When companies went from enterprise computing to individual computing, they jumped over the small-group level, where the preponderance of work takes place. The first computers, typified by the IBM 360 behemoths of the 1960s, supported company-wide operations. The generation of computers that followed supported department organizations, eventually morphing into today's servers. In the 1980s, personal computers boosted individuals' productivity. Then in the 1990s, the Internet and the Web connected these previously isolated individuals informally, boosting their productivity even more.¹

At few points in the evolution of the computer did group users ever come into play. The small group, the working team, was forgotten in our quest for productivity, even though the team is where the work of an organi-

zation takes place. The technology exists for our working teams and committees to be more productive and efficient. Libraries need to recognize the availability of Internet-based tools and begin to integrate them into our work processes. This means that as an organization, you should schedule fewer meetings and allow for more experimentation with tools that enable your staff to get their work done. Though it is fine for individuals to look outside of accepted means to complete the work that is asked of them, more organizations need to integrate more tools into the work flow. An organization that fosters an environment of experimentation and learning will be an organization with happier, more productive members.

Fostering this type of environment will take training, time, and the effort of staff on all levels, but the organization that empowers its members in this way will truly be a successful organization.

Note

1. Ann Majchrzak, Arvind Makhorta, Jeffrey Stamps, and Jessica Lipnack, "Can Absence Make a Team Grow Stronger?" *Harvard Business Review* (May 2004): 131-137.