

# Computer mediated communication – summary



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The paper will assess six advantages and five disadvantages in CM. The nature of the topic dictates the use of both advantages/ strangeness and a comparative analysis of the main differences in computer- mediated communication. The research draws attention to the problems and benefits associated with computer-mediated communication and summarize the increases in cost savings and time which essentially create a 2417 organization that in most companies produces less than 6 percent turnover.

Further investigations reveal that it is impersonal and has many flaws however, it is clear that CM has made it possible for organizations to communicate almost exclusively electronically. Clearly, CM has changed the way that modern businesses operate. This report evaluates the advantages/disadvantages associated with CM and concludes that though there are disadvantages to the communication, the benefits far outweigh the problems associated with computer-mediated interactions.

Computer Mediated Communication (CM) is defined as synchronous or asynchronous processes by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages (Remission's ; Mason, 2005) CM encompasses networked computing yester such as electronic mail, interactive messaging, bulletin boards, discussion groups, list servers, and conferencing (Enchain ; McCormick, 2009). CM allows workers to communicate through theses mediums with anyone, anywhere, anytime (Dell, 2004).

CM has influenced more organizations worldwide to network through computers (Enchain ; McCormick, 2009). However, there are benefits and trade-offs linked to this communication (Dell, 2004). What is the First Advantage In CM? It enhances interaction patterns. Virtual relationships are more likely to develop as ore messages are sent across a CM medium (Storms, Grommet, ; Locke, 2007). When more messages are sent, the virtual relationship is built as participants grow more comfortable with each other (Taylor, 2007).

Once a relationship is established, then workers can begin to collaborate and evaluate information effectively (Enchain ; McCormick, 2009). There is a positive relationship between the growth in the number of virtual communications and improvement with efficiency in the workplace (Storms, et. Al. , 2007). There are two main types of CM that are linked to enhanced communications. Synchronous CM allows two or more users to communicate simultaneously by typing messages to each other like chatting, while asynchronous communication takes place at different times with email, real-time or blobs (Storms, et. Al. 2007). These forms of communication offer a variety of benefits to the user and establish a medium where possibilities for interaction and feedback are limitless (Remission's & Mason, 2008). This enables more interactions in the virtual realm of CM and encourages group work. The primary goal of CM in the workplace is to create group memory by providing comments and concussions attached to the project (Dell, 2004). CM facilitates beneficial discussions between workers creating efficiency in projects thus, enhancing interactions. Although enhanced interactions are beneficial in CM, conversely, it is impersonal.

What is the First Disadvantage in CM? CM lacks personal communication. The replacement of face-to-face communication with CM has created the absence of socio-emotional and nonverbal cues (Enchain & McCormick, 2009). Because participants cannot see others facial expressions, gestures, voice intonations, appearance, or physical adornments; it is ore difficult to interpret nonverbal responses that they might make (Remission's ; Mason, 2008). Para verbal cues are also missing with CM such as voice, inflection, and volume may inhibit the flow of communications (Storms et. L. , 2007). Since CM lacks nonverbal elements or feedback cues, participants are less likely to know who they are conversing with which makes it less personal (Remission's &Mason, 2007). The absence of human contact can also lead to people paying less attention to other participants because their attention is elsewhere and no one is present to restrain them. Even if workers do become absorbed in conversation, they are more likely to insult other users because of the lack of social cues to show them what appropriate (Taylor, 2007).

The disadvantages lie in relationships where intimacy is impeded and the basis of a relationship is more difficult to form, directing participants to the kind of impersonal communication that is expected of CM (Storms et. Al. , 2007). CM can produce negative results; however, it is excellent for improving performance. What is the Second Advantage In CM? It improves performance in the workplace. CM encourages more active and equal ratification in the workplace because the transfer of knowledge between employees, allows multiple individuals to benefit from the knowledge of a few (Taylor, 2007).

This can provide a sense of learning when workers collaborate with others to negotiate and share information, which is more likely to enrich participation (Enchain & McCormick, 2009). The increase of corporate discussion boards and wise has enhanced more active learning and collaboration (Remission's ; Mason, 2008). A Stanford University professor, Vivaldi Krebs, conducted research about CM in the workplace with IBM found that " highly connected people in the ritual realm are producing positive results" (Dell, 2004).

Improved performance on the Job may be due to the speed, flexibility of access, and ease of use (Enchain ; McCormick, 2009). CM can be a faster mode of communication than many face-to-face meetings which facilitates productive employees (Dell, 2004). Because there are networks in businesses over which employees can converse with one another, CM can help to develop lateral communication among these fellow workers, also leading to workplace efficiency (Romanization ; Mason, 2008).

In 2008, new innovations were implemented in CM making the technology more adaptable and accessible from mobile devices to increase employee efficiency (Enchain ; McCormick, 2009). Yet, in spite of improved performance, technical issues may cause problems in computer-mediated communication. What is the second disadvantage in CM? Technical barriers can present many challenges in effective CM. Particularly, CM can become an issue if it malfunctions because communication barriers and time differences make the resolution of problems much more difficult Carbon, 2005).

Another technological issue in CM is that it causes sensory overload in users cause so much information can be threaded simultaneously, making it difficult to keep track of the discussion (Storms et. Al. , 2007). Each, a Swiss reporter, found difficulty in CM stating that “ when you finally enter your question into the discussion, it could have moved away from the question that initially elicited your response. The sequential content has changed, making it harder to interpret your message” (Keeled ; Hosier, 2008).

This could clearly present a problem with virtual group coordination of the discussion and hamper problem solving (Storms et. Al. , 2007). The variety of technical drawbacks in CM has created more problems with navigation and created a new workplace culture (Dell, 2004). The mass recent contributions to CM have created several disadvantages in the ability to navigate the systems properly, provide limited opportunity for multiple discussions, and ability to filter relevant information (Romanization ; Mason, 2008).

More technical barriers have resulted in the creation of a new virtual culture such as: netiquette, rules, and emoticons (Dell, 2004). Employees who participate in CM developed a way of expressing emotions that creates miscommunication in virtual relationships specially in culture (Enchain ; McCormick, 2009). This new virtual culture inhibits communications and productivity among employees (Keeled ; Hosier, 2008). Although there are many technical barriers in CM, in contrast, it increases the flow of information. What is the third advantage in CM?

Increase in accessibility to information is a notable advantage in CM for a variety of reasons. There are many networks that increase access to

information among employees which include Raze, Linked, Spoke Software, and Rust and now the technology is available to millions of professionals (Dell, 2004). It provides a new medium to gain useful information and possesses the capability to accumulate and store information for future use (Storms et. Al. , 2007). Information and knowledge is one of the most important assets to firms (Taylor, 2007).

Although knowledge can be brought into businesses through external means, internally developed information is important to expanding an organization (Seven, 2006). More specifically, it benefits employees to share their information with others to increase efficiency (Taylor, 2007). CM increases information through simultaneous collaborations and idea sharing. In a study conducted by Brannon ; Burgess in 2008, over 76 percent of professionals surveyed claimed to engage in internet-enabled activities to gain information and support professional learning (Enchain ; McCormick, 2009).

Additionally, the professionals reported it was useful in generating ideas for new work projects. This can be generated through virtual teams for brainstorming with others and collaborating informational research (Seven, 2006). Although there are positive findings linked to increased information, in comparison, it can lead to other drawbacks where trust becomes an issue. What is the Third Disadvantage Associated with CM? Confidentiality and trust are some elements that take time to ripen in order to be felt among employees who participate in CM.

This can inhibit the flow of communication and foster an environment where exploitation exists since so many anonymous users are lurking online

(Enchain ; McCormick, 2009). For example, Ethan Schooner, Asian e-business director at Lowe + Draft, comments about his use of Groove workspaces to manage meetings online. He said, " I want to know who is present in the space, not just who is online but lingering outside the space, bled to be called in from the hallway' (Dell, 2004). This clearly indicates trust issues regarding sensitive business information transferred through CM (Romanization & Mason, 2008).

Confidentiality issues are less likely to exist in face-to-face situations (Taylor, 2006). Moreover, confidentiality and trust is a growing concern in CM when professionals question the validity/credibility of the information and abuse within the system occurs. The hard problem is figuring out " who knows what" and how credible the information is that is being presented (Dell, 2004). Although died conferencing has proved useful in eliminating trust issues in this arena, it is still difficult to trace the validity of research sent over these virtual mediums (Storms et. Al. , 2007).

Additionally, virtual abuse is a disadvantage to mediated- communications because of cyber-stalking and sexual harassment (Taylor, 2006). Although there are many problems associated with trust, yet, it can aid in communication processes. What is the Fourth Advantage in CM? CM lifts communication barriers by providing an anonymous way for employees to freely interact (Seven, 2006). Professionals who participate in CM environments eel freer to propose ideas since they do not have to face nonverbal objections, and they can produce ideas without any kind of interruption from their peers (Storms et. L. , 2007). It also benefits in more coherent knowledge sharing, as text-based communication can be easier

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than oral communication (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009). The anonymity encouraged by CM can eliminate the anxiety over how people might be judged based on their opinions, and it leads to a medium in which people feel more free to express themselves and stand up for their rights (Romanization & Mason, 2008). Furthermore, CM fosters more participation and contribution from people who would otherwise feel intimidated (Seven, 2006).

This is an advantage to professionals because there is no bias (Taylor, 2007). More ways that CM enables communication is through decreasing risk and geographic barriers. CM has been described as a neutral mediation of communication which establishes a safe environment with less risk to communications (Carbon, 2005). This benefits workers by allowing them to feel less inhibited about communicating their ideas, opinions, and feelings about certain issues (Storms et. Al. , 2007). Finally, CM fits geographic barriers and facilitates uninhibited communications all over the world (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009).

Although CM enables effective communication, conversely, it can inhibit productivity. What is the Fourth disadvantage Linked to CM? CM can inhibit effective work patterns producing negative effects in a variety of ways. CM interactions can be time consuming and require a great deal of self-discipline (Carbon, 2005). The amount of time involved in a series of CM messages, though important, is less significant than the number and length of these messages (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009).

Also the rate of information exchange for CM is inherently slower because of the need to think about and type a response (Romanization & Mason, 2008). So it requires more time and messages in CM to give and take information in CM than it would face-to-face which can affect productivity (Storms, et al. , 2007). CM also can take from individuality and cause disagreements. When interactions have low salience, De-individualism occurs and can lead to reduced productivity (Seven, 2006).

When employees lose identity in CM, it produces reduced numbers of spontaneous responses and decreased radioactivity (Romanization & Mason, 2008). According to a recent study, over 50 percent of employees who withdraw from mediated-communications tend to lose sight of the goal and become less productive within their organization (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009). Although CM can weaken work patterns, in comparison, it can create a sense of community. What is the Fifth Advantage of CM? Online community development can foster a way for professionals to tap into many different sources.

CM can provide a sense of community when participants collaborate with others to negotiate and share meanings (Taylor, 2006). It is likely to enrich the workplace because it develops a context where colleagues who are not in the same space can work in virtual teams and call on the expertise of others (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009). For example, an accountant may have expertise in designing or auditing spread-sheets (Taylor, 2006). As co-workers recognize this expertise, they seek out the expert to develop and test spreadsheets.

Through this process, thoughtful discourse can take place and the expert can share his knowledge with co-workers who are unable to perform the task alone (Romanization & Mason, 2008). Thoughtful discourse and supportive feedback create a stronger online network of workers. Face-to-face interactions can be abrupt and leave professionals unable to supply thoughtful feedback (Seven, 2006). Thoughtful discourse between co-workers is essential in maintaining community during computer-mediated interactions (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009).

Additionally, CM can initiate online networks that might never have begun if a face-to-face meeting were required (Carbon 2005). These networks create a neutral environment in which colleagues can collaborate, offer supportive feedback, and participate in an inline community (Taylor, 2006). Although CM clearly provides benefits in the online community, on the other hand, it can be bad in leadership scenarios. What is Fifth Disadvantage in CM?

Leadership roles can present many disadvantages in CM. One way it can inhibit leadership is the lack of face-to-face communication (Taylor, 2006).

Virtual team members do not see their leader so the level of daily communication is relatively low and can result in management difficulties (Seven, 2006). Recent studies indicate that virtual teams have problems identifying with their leaders since the team mandarin are not always clear and leadership roles can often be De-emphasized (Enchain & McCormick, 2009). Furthermore, studies indicate leaders have troubles leading teams in virtual settings that lack face-to-face communication (Seven, 2006).

Leadership can be distorted in other ways and can create more complex roles for both employees and leaders alike (Storms et al. 2007). Many teams

have formalized goals that can be assessed by various stakeholders throughout the firm Carbon, 2005). Meeting deadlines is also a measure in the virtual leadership realm (Seven, 2006). Failure to complete tasks and actions, without satisfactory explanation is likely to degrade the perception of leaders and members of a virtual team (Storms et al. , 2007). Additionally, ineffective leadership within CM can ruin problem-solving, organizational performance, communication, and acceptance of feedback (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009).

This can create high employee turnover due to dissatisfaction and isolated work patterns which present disadvantages in overall performance of the team. Although leadership roles play an important part in mediated-communications, conversely, it can benefit in efficiency. What is the Final Sixth Advantage Linked to CM? Increased efficiency in the workplace is a benefit in CM because of many reasons. The ability to leverage expertise through CM interactions can lead to a competitive advantage through reduced costs and increased productivity (Taylor, 2006).

Alternatively, when employees participate in CM, social relationships may be difficult to form; so employees remain more task-oriented which is a clear advantage in the workplace (Enhancing & McCormick, 2009). For the average business user, CM can be more useful in searching for potential employers, employees, and ratters which increases output (Dell, 2004). Computer-mediated interactions also make workers more articulate and creates a network of independent workers (Taylor, 2006). In most forms of CM, a writer is allowed more time to plan a response that shows off his/her better side (Romanization & Mason, 2008).

This helps professionals in the workplace to articulate their responses and increase efficiency (Dell, 2004). CM fosters independent workers because it can shift the primary responsibility from the manager to the employee (Enchain & McCormick, 2009). CM creates self-development among workers which tends to make them more responsible for their own development. This helps workers to increase efficiency since they are less reliant on management for solutions (Romanization & Mason, 2008).

Although there are many benefits which exist in CM, it is important to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the communication. How Can Advantages/Disadvantages Be Compared in CM? The differences in CM have been widely debated among individuals about whether or not these differences render the communication more or less personal (Carbon, 2005). The main controversy surrounding CM is whether these differences help to improve communication among professionals and make it more personal, or whether they serve to diminish the level of intimacy that can be achieved (Romanization & Mason, 2008).

For others, however; intimacy is not a core requirement for work relationships (Carbon, 2005). In contrast, it can be argued that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. For example, when studies are extended to examine CM relationship for a longer amount of time, it has been observed that many of these impersonal aspects disappear as participants exchange more messages (Romanization & Mason, 2008). It would also seem that the CM groups can develop positive virtual relationships as long as they are given sufficient time to mature (Seven, 2006).

Conversely, many professionals comment that it inhibits the flow of communication and ruins productive work (Dell, 2004). It is clear that CM has led many organizations to change the way in which they operate and interface employees, customers, and stakeholders (Lewis, Goodman, Fanny, & Masochistic, 2007). It has enabled organizations to streamline interactions with other businesses. Of course, CM has made it possible for organizations to communicate and interact with customers almost exclusively electronically. Consider Amazon. Mom and the many e-businesses that continue to grow as a result of CM (Taylor, 2006).

Organizational goals are met as managers learn to communicate across these virtual mediums well. In comparison, leadership perceptions can be distorted which can be a problem, however; the electronic information and communication links between these workers and the organization creates a virtual organization that can reduce the need for a aroma office or workspace. This approach is cost efficient for the organization and has helped keep the turnover rate down (Lewis et al. , 2007).

Many organizations on Fortune's annual list of the " 100 Best Companies to Work For" companies provide the flexibility of CM in within the organization. Many creative free-lance workers, contract, and temporary workers, and small companies are using this form of communication technology including Xerox, American Express, Apple Computer, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The average turnover rates at these companies are less than 6 percent. Hence, the advantages to the communication present great opportunities for many professionals, in contrast, what can be learned and concluded from CM is important to note.

What Can be Concluded About CM? The key findings indicate that CM offers a variety of benefits in the workplace which include the following: enhanced interactions, improved performance, more information, better communication, and increased efficiency. CM also provides the opportunity to develop online community relationships. Though negative findings to the communication indicate impersonal interactions, technical issues, and trust issues. Moreover, more drawbacks include problems with leadership and work patterns.

Overall, this report outlined current research associated with the pros and cons of computer-mediated communication and concluded that the benefits overcame the drawbacks. After investigating a sample of current research, it is clear that the virtual world is entering a new realm where face-to-face communications eventually may be replaced with computer-mediated communications Carbon, 2005). Furthermore, the end result could change the way business is conducted entirely. Enchain, M. R. , & McCormick, J. J. (2009). Culture and the processes of virtual teaming for training.