Studying Global Work Groups in the Field

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Abstract

In this chapter, we describe our methodological approach to studying globally distributed work groups in organizations and share some of our insights. We describe the principles that drive the composition of our research team, how we select and gain access to field sites, and how we conduct interviews with people whose native cultures and languages are different from our own. In our work together, we developed a method of "concurrent observations" to study dispersed team members. This chapter describes that method, its opportunities and challenges. Finally, we discuss our approach to data analysis, given the intensity of travel and the difficulty of coding data while in the field. We hope that this chapter will provide a source of inspiration for others who seek to develop new approaches to the study of globally distributed work teams.