

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the impact of virtual communication among professionals within the South African construction industry by analysis of responses to a distributed questionnaire and interviews which will highlight trends and hindrances to effective communication. It hopes to answer the key question of key factors affecting virtual communication from a global perspective to that of the current South African state in order to improve future forms of ICT to maintain and enhance global competitiveness.

To date, many construction organisations are autocratic and have a hierarchical organisational structure, which is often static and unable to change to current market needs. However, there is a growing trend for organisations to form specialised decentralised teams. These units are dynamic and are more flexible with knowledge transfer allowing their organisation to adapt to the ever changing global market. One particular adaptation in the construction industry is in information communication technology (ICT) which has resulted in organisations becoming more globally competitive. ICT is becoming more widely used in the construction project life cycle.

While the development of virtual collaborations has allowed for companies to be globally competitive, there are areas in need of improvement such as communication and information processing. The use of current communication methods and processes are technologically driven and do not consider the individual's psychological aspects. Social interaction within a workplace is important with a move away from autocratic information dissemination. These aspects have a direct effect on project delivery efficiency; productivity of labour force; as well as quality of the final product.

There is a distinct shift in the use of different media for communication and effective those medium has proved to be. The reluctance to change and how quickly individuals adapt to technological advancements also impact on the efficiency of communication.