

Women are 'socially' networked, study shows

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Bloggers and other social network users are more likely to share knowledge online where the qualities of trust, strong social ties and reciprocity are present, according to a study forthcoming in the *Journal of Management Information Systems*.

But the effect of each factor varies by gender, says Sanjukta Das, assistant professor of [management science](#) and systems in the University at Buffalo (UB) School of Management. Das conducted the study with co-authors H.R. Rao, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor in the UB School of Management, and Sangmi Chai, assistant professor at the College of Business in Sangmyung University in Seoul, Korea.

The researchers found that women bloggers tend to value reciprocity, or mutual exchange, and [social ties](#) much more than men, and they were more likely to share knowledge in an environment where those elements were present.

Das and her co-authors found that trust was an important factor as well. [Knowledge sharing](#) was greater when there was trust -- trust in the quality of information and the credibility of those sharing it, and trust in the blogging community and the blog service providers. And while [trust](#) was important for both men and women, it was more important for women.

"When women bloggers interact with other bloggers to share knowledge, they are more concerned than men with maintaining relationships," Das says. "Men place more value on competition and control."

The study also revealed that online [privacy concerns](#) had a negative impact on knowledge sharing for both genders, but interestingly, much more so for men.

"It's not that women aren't concerned with privacy issues," Das says. "They actually have higher privacy concerns than men, but because women value social ties and [reciprocity](#) so much, they are willing to assume some risk when it comes to privacy."

The researchers conclude that IT managers and blog service providers can promote the use of blogs and other social media as knowledge-sharing tools by being more aware of gender differences.

"They can greatly enhance participation by catering to the needs and concerns of their target audiences," Das says.

Provided by University at Buffalo

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