

Innovation is born out of conflict

September 20 2012, by Tea Kalska



When different organisations work together to create something new, conflicts and differences may serve as an impetus for the generation of innovations. This statement was made in an article, produced in SimLab, that was granted the Project Management Journal's Paper of the Year Award 2012.

The article was created in the KIMPPA research project at SimLab or the Enterprise Simulation Laboratory of the School of [Science](#). The project, funded by five municipalities and Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and [Innovation](#), explored how different organisations create a common strategy to develop municipal services.

In situations where people agree on everything, they have no problems exchanging information and learning new things, but the need to develop

and take things further may not be there.

'When organisations that work together have different objectives, their opinions may also be at odds with each other. For example, each of the different groups of actors in the studied strategy process found their own group to be highly strategic', explains researcher Pauli Alin, one of the authors of the article.

'One way to solve a [conflict](#) is to create new information through a process in which each party is allowed to take part', Alin crystallises.

SimLab simulates genuine cooperation

The research project upon which the article is based represents the unique method applied at SimLab in collecting data on cooperation between companies and on the generation of new innovations.

Professor Riitta Smeds, Head of SimLab, stresses that research in the laboratory focuses on current cooperation projects implemented between real organisations. The researchers organise meetings and invite people who are actually involved in these projects.

The people will all sit in one room and, guided by the person moderating the joint discussion, go over the [project](#) with the help of a process map prepared based on interviews. Audio and video recordings are made of each session.

Unique data

After the meeting is over, the audio and video recordings of the situation are analysed.

'This allows us to explore how new creative thoughts emerge on the interfaces between companies and what kind of dynamics are involved in the processes of their generation', Smeds says.

According to Smeds and Alin, concrete data on dialogue carried out between real, cooperating organisations has not been collected anywhere else. Typically, experiments have involved students who have adopted specific roles given to them and taken part in a discussion in an artificial situation.

'Today, we are able to simulate cooperation also in the virtual world, using avatars. Virtual situations, too, can be recorded and analysed', Smeds adds.

Provided by Aalto University

Citation: Innovation is born out of conflict (2012, September 20) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-09-born-conflict.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--