For the right employees, even standard information technology can spur creativity

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In a money-saving revelation for organizations inclined to invest in specialized information technology to support the process of idea generation, new research suggests that even non-specialized, everyday

organizational IT can encourage employees' creativity.

Recently published in the journal *Information and Organization*, these findings from Dorit Nevo, an associate professor in the Lally School of Management at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, show standard IT can be used for [innovation](). Furthermore, this is much more likely to happen when the technology is in the hands of employees who are motivated to master technology, understand their role in the organization, are recognized for their efforts, and are encouraged to develop their skills.

"What this study reveals is that innovation is found not just by using technology specifically created to support idea-generation," Nevo said. "Creativity comes from both the tool and the person who uses it."

Most businesses and organizations use common computer technologies, such as business analytics programs, knowledge management systems, and point-of-sale systems, to enable employees to complete basic job responsibilities. Nevo wanted to know if this standard IT could also be used by employees to create new ideas in the front end of the innovation process, where ideas are generated, developed, and then championed.

By developing a theoretically grounded model to examine IT-enabled innovation in an [empirical study](), Nevo found that employees who are motivated to master IT can use even standard technology as a creativity tool, increasing the return on investment on the technologies companies already have in-house.

"An organization can get a lot more value out of their IT technology if they let the right people use them and then support them," Nevo said. "This added value will, in turn, save organizations money because they don't always have to invest in specialized technology in order for their employees to generate solutions to work-related issues or ideas for improvement in the workplace. You just have to trust your employees to

be able to innovate with the technologies you have."

More information: Saggi Nevo et al, Exploring the Role of IT in the Front-End of Innovation: An Empirical Study of IT-Enabled Creative Behavior, *Information and Organization* (2020). DOI: 10.1016/j.infoandorg.2020.100322

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