

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Department of Information Systems,
Business Statistics and Operations Management

Seminar Announcement

***The Influence of Software Platform Architecture
on Platform Abandonment:
An Empirical Study of Firefox Extension Developers***

by

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Date: Tuesday, 15 March 2011

Time: 2:30 – 4:00 pm

Venue: Room 4379, ISOM Conference Room (Lift 17/18)

~~~~~ All interested are welcome ~~~~~

**Abstract:** With competition increasingly among rival software-based, platform-centric ecosystems, retaining third-party developers outside firm boundaries is increasingly important. Such “module” developers often provide critically-differentiating technical innovations and new ideas, thus are vital to a platform’s success. This study addresses the underexplored question of how and why platform modularity—both technical and organizational—influences platform abandonment by developers. We introduce the notion of systems integration costs—which comprise both cross-module integration and module-platform integration—as a key explanatory construct in our nomological network.

We develop three ideas, building on modular systems theory. First, a decrease in systems integration costs decreases the likelihood of platform abandonment by module developers. Second, different facets of technical modularity differentially impact systems integration costs. Third, these relationships are moderated by how authority over technical decisions is shared between a module developer and the platform owner (organizational modularity). Tests using data from developers of 342 modules for Mozilla’s Firefox browser platform largely support the proposed ideas.

**Bio:** Amrit Tiwana is an Associate Professor at The University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business. He was previously on Emory University’s faculty, which he joined after completing his Ph.D. (IS) in 2001 at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Most recently, he was on Iowa State University’s faculty (where he held the Union Pacific professorship and courtesy appointments in Computer Science and in Management). He has also held a visiting research professorship at Osaka Prefecture University in Japan from 2008-2009. Prof Tiwana’s research (DLBP, CSB, Google Scholar, SSRN) focuses on IT governance, with an emphasis on systems development. His work has appeared in *ISR*, *SMJ*, *JMIS*, *ACM Transactions*, *IEEE Transactions*, *Decision Sciences*, *CMR*, *IEEE Software*, and others. He currently serves as an Associate Editor for *Information Systems Research (ISR)*, and received *ISR*’s Outstanding Associate Editor award in 2009. He has also served as a special Associate Editor for *MIS Quarterly*. He also serves on the editorial boards of *Journal of Management Information Systems* and *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*.