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Two-stage offshoring: an investigation of the Irish bridge

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Research Area	GSD
Project Title	Approaches to distributed development

Research Objective

- ❑ To explore the dual role experienced by two Irish sites in a two-stage offshoring relationship
- ❑ To develop a theoretical model of the dual role in two-stage offshoring relationship
- ❑ Motivation:
 - Little research on the customer-vendor relationship in offshoring, and none specifically on the dual role when acting as both customer and vendor

Research method

- ❑ Qualitative study involving two software development companies (Jan 2005 – Aug 2006)
 - interviews (22 in total)
 - on-site meetings (2)
 - company workshops (2)
- ❑ Relational Exchange Theory (RET) as organizing principle for data collection and as theoretical lens for data analysis

Background

- ❑ Growing realization that the customer-vendor relationship plays a critical role in the success or failure of the outsourcing relationship (Lee and Kim, 1999)
- ❑ Recognition of the importance of the customer-vendor relationship (Goles and Chin, 2005)
- ❑ Lack of empirical studies that focus on the elements that comprise such a relationship
- ❑ Inconsistent conceptualization of the nature of this relationship
- ❑ Ireland in unique position – ‘bridge’ between US and Asia
- ❑ Acting as both customer and vendor in ‘two-stage offshoring’ relationship
 - Are there different “bridge” models?
 - What unique knowledge do Irish companies leverage in acting as a “bridge”?
 - To what extent can knowledge (and what kind of knowledge) be transferred from one relationship to another?

Two approaches to the ‘bridge model’

- ❑ **The Irish Bridge: Team integration**
 - Cross-site integration, i.e. geographical distance does not define team boundaries, “extended teams” with close relationship
 - Loose inter-site coupling, i.e. sites at different locations remain independent of each other, the bridge model does not appear during day-to-day work
- ❑ **The Irish Bridge: Organizational level implementation**
 - Managerial level, “managerial bridge”
 - Managerial and software engineering levels
- ❑ **The Irish Bridge: Site hierarchy**
 - One site considered ‘superior’
 - Sites organized as ‘peer’

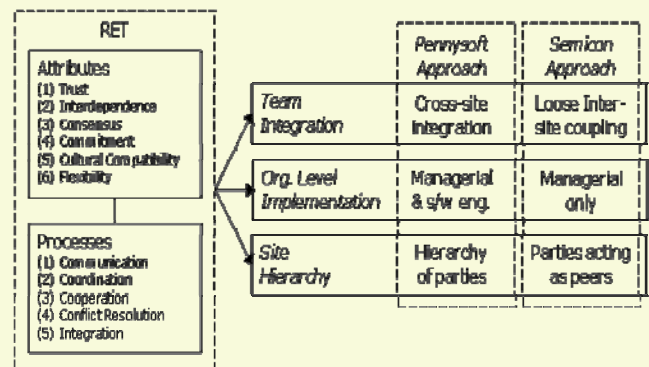


Fig. 1. Two approaches to the ‘bridge model’ in two-stage offshoring

Published Papers

- ❑ Holmström, H., Ó Conchúir, E., Ågerfalk, P. and Fitzgerald B. (2008). Two-Stage Offshoring: An Investigation of the Irish Bridge. *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2, June 2008.
- ❑ Holmström, H., Ó Conchúir, E., Ågerfalk, P. and Fitzgerald B. (2006). The Irish Bridge: A case study of the dual role in offshore sourcing relationships. *27th International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS)*. Milwaukee, USA, December, 2006.
- ❑ Holmström, H., Ó Conchúir, E., Ågerfalk, P.J., and Fitzgerald, B (2006). The Irish Bridge: A two-sided perspective on the customer-vendor relationship in offshore sourcing. *In Proceedings of IRIS (Information Systems Research in Scandinavia)*, Helsingør, Denmark, 12-15 August, 2006.