Recent developments in information and communication technologies have brought in a new wave of changes in the business organizations. This change is primarily a social phenomenon, rather than a management or technology driven plan, which is percolating in a bottom-up manner - from individuals to businesses - and is directed towards building of collaborative culture and communities that transcend geographical boundaries. As a result, organizations in every sphere need to reorganize themselves and find new procedures and controls to harness the strengths of this social change.

The second Virtual Conference on Business and Management (VCOBAM 2010) was an attempt to explore this subject. Organized by U21Global Graduate School on Oct 25-26, 2010, held over the web, this conference attracted scholarly contributions on the theme - New Paradigms: Business and Management. Select set of presented papers were invited to submit their extended version for possible inclusion in this issue. After double blind reviews and revisions, finally, four papers have been selected for this special issue. Collectively, these papers show case the current practices, challenges and potential use of collaborative web technologies in different business functions and organizations.

The first paper titled, “Implications for Improving Accessibility to E-Commerce Websites in Developing Countries: A Study of Hotel Websites” by Arunasalam Sambhanthan and Alice Good explores the issue of accessibility of e-commerce websites in developing countries. The study, based on web survey and web content analysis of Sri Lankan Hotels shows that there is no significant correlation between accessibility and geographical or economic factors. However, physical impairments, particularly visual and mobility impairment of users have a considerable influence on the accessibility of web page user interface. Affecting design elements are identified through web content analysis, the results of which are utilized to develop specific implications for improving web accessibility.

The second paper titled, “Geographies of Open Source Biotechnology Innovation: Buzz, Pipelines, and Proximity in a Virtual Cluster” by David Tamoschus draws our attention to the use of virtual clusters for research and innovation in the field of biotechnology. Biotechnology research was characteristically organized in a highly specialized clusters based largely on local face-to-face communications; however this archetypal configuration may undergo changes due to the emerging applicability of...
open innovation models such as ‘open source biotechnology’ or the advanced integration of physicians and patients into drug development processes. Based on an in-depth case study of a ‘Open Source Pharma’ network, this paper portrays how innovation and knowledge integration mechanisms are put into practice through ‘permanence’ in virtual space.

Third paper, “Socio-Behavioral Factors in Virtual Knowledge Sharing: Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behavior Perspective” has been co-authored by Farkhondeh Hassandoust, Mehdy Farzaneh Kazerouni, and Vimala Perumal. The paper aims to explore the factors that affect the behaviour of members of virtual teams for knowledge sharing. It integrates the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to construct a model to investigate the socio-behavioural factors categorized in three conceptual components - attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control.

The fourth paper, “Social Media: Opportunities and Challenges for Human Resource Management” is co-authored by Archana Tyagi and Ragini Tyagi. This paper suggests that to embrace social media tools seamlessly in the organizations can be a real challenge for the human resource management professionals. Based on literature survey, it presents the foundational components of social media linked with human resource processes and lays the groundwork required for the companies to harness the potential of social media in the long run.

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IJKBO