Glossary of Terms

**All-hands meeting** – Informational meetings, often held on a quarterly basis, where all members of a particular organization (or, in some cases, the entire company) are invited to attend to hear general organization announcements such as updates on key initiatives, discussion of key organizational goals, general announcements, companywide updates, etc. Often referred to as coffee sessions, coffee talks, or town hall meetings, as well.

**Audioconferencing** – A service that allows virtual meeting participants to gather easily via the telephone to conduct meetings. (See Tools index of discussion of features and functionality.)

**Center-of-the-universe syndrome** – Center-of-the-universe syndrome can emerge when there is an area of large concentration of co-location for a particular virtual team. Team members in that location often develop the mindset that their location is the “center of the universe” and that any face-to-face meetings planned should occur there, virtual meetings should be scheduled to best accommodate that time zone, and so forth.

**Coffee sessions, coffee talks** – See all-hands meeting.
Co-located Team – A team where all team members are located in the same floor, building, campus, etc., and are able to easily gather for face to face meetings.

E-lancing – A virtual team model where freelance workers and employers come together in the open market through the Internet to form virtual working teams. This term was first coined by Professors Tom Malone and Rob Laubacher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Firewall – Hardware or software solution that is used to prohibited unauthorized access to a network or computing system.

Geographically distributed project teams – A project team comprised of individuals from different organizations (with different management reporting structures) brought together to deliver a specific set of results.

Instant messaging – Software solutions that allow team members to exchange real time messages (chat) and presence information (I’m off-line, online, busy, away, on the phone, etc.).

Manage by objective – Management style that focuses on rewarding those who meet clearly articulated goals and objectives.

Meeting management software – Software or solutions that help with facilitation of virtual team meetings, enabling functions such as application sharing, shared viewing of slide sets, and so forth.

Organizational distributed teams – Teams in which members share a common management reporting structure; however, the members are geographically distributed across multiple sites or locations.

Plan of record (POR) – A list of active projects and programs and their associated completion dates. Typically, each entry in a POR also includes a contact name or the name of the project owner.
Presence - Term applied to the features of instant messaging that allow users to determine whether colleagues are online, busy, on the phone, away, and so forth.

Project launch – The initial meeting for a project team. Agenda items at a project launch typically include tasks such as introducing project team members, outlining project goals, developing project plans and schedules, assessing project resources, and so forth.

Remote manager – An individual who manages employees that do not reside on the same floor or in the same building or campus area, thus limiting opportunities for face-to-face interaction.

Teamware or teamspaces – An umbrella term often applied to any number of software solutions and Web-based services that provide a tool-set for virtual teams (or any team, for that matter) to collaborate together off-line. (See Tools index of discussion of features and functionality.)

Telecommuter – An individual who works from their home.

Town hall meeting – See all-hands meeting.

Virtual communities – Groups of individuals that form around a common, shared interest and interact through electronic toolsets (e-mail, chat rooms, etc.). Within corporations, communities can be formed around areas such as shared organizations (all employees on the XYZ team), job functions (sales representatives, lab engineers, etc.), areas of interest (information technology, software development, knowledge management, etc.).

Virtual ecosystem – Groups of organizations that act together primarily through electronic means. The virtual ecosystem can include one or more organizations that act as suppliers, consumers, or partners.
Virtual meetings – Meetings conducted with no face-to-face interaction among the attendees. Virtual meetings are facilitated by tools such as audioconferencing, meeting management software, and the like.

Virtual organization – An organization whose members are geographically distributed among sites and alternate work locations (telecommuting, etc.).

Virtual team – A team with members that are geographically distributed across more than one location. Virtual teams can include geographically dispersed teams, where team members live and work in different locations/states/countries from each other; teams with telecommuters (a form of geographic dispersion in itself); teams formed horizontally across vertical organizations (project teams, task forces, etc.); or teams formed across different companies.

Water cooler experience – Phrase often used to describe the types of information interaction that occurs in breakrooms, coffee areas, water cooler, and so forth, among members of co-located teams.