

SONIC



SONIC
Speaker
Series



Thursday, September 15, 2011
10:30-11:30 a.m. CDT

Room 1-483
Frances Searle Building
Northwestern University
Evanston Campus



Collaborative Production of Scientific Knowledge

Research scientists have become increasingly dependent on collaborations across laboratories and organizations to maintain their productivity. However, growing specialization of individual laboratories works against a current drive towards understanding systems in the sciences. Consequently, there is a tension between the rising importance of collaborative efforts and the practical and structural challenges in establishing and managing such collaborations in the quest to understand our world. Drawing on ethnographic case studies of three academic research labs, we illustrate how scientific knowledge is produced in collaborations that are established and maintained through virtual organizations (VOs). As much as VOs can facilitate scientific work across time and space, they do not eradicate the social aspects (e.g. trust among scientists, institutional limitations, laboratory cultures) to scientific knowledge production.

Maria Binz-Scharf

Associate Professor of
Management

City College of CUNY

mbinzscharf@ccny.cuny.edu

If you would like a copy of the background reading please contact the SONIC Program Assistant:
mjlogan@northwestern.edu

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Maria Binz-Scharf is Associate Professor of Management at the City College of CUNY, and Visiting Researcher at Xerox PARC. Her research examines how individuals search for and share knowledge to accomplish work. In particular, she is interested in understanding the role technology plays in processes of knowledge sharing and innovation. With the support of grants from the NSF and NIH, she has studied the knowledge networks of biologists, primary care physicians, and DNA forensic scientists.