Contingency Effects on Time-critical Collaborative Decision-making

Potential Tracks:  
4 Cognitive and Social Issues  
7 Network-centric Experimentation and Applications  
1 C2 Concepts, Theory and Policy

Andrew Dowse (PhD STUDENT)* and Dr Edward Lewis  
School of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering  
University of New South Wales at the  
Australian Defence Force Academy

*Point of Contact  
Russell Offices (R1-6-C093)  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia  
Tel (61) 2 62655512  
e-mail: a.dowse@adfa.edu.au or andrew.dowse@defence.gov.au
Abstract

Key to the concept of Network Centric Warfare is the social interaction between elements of a diverse force to create synergy, unity of purpose and harmony of action. This paper examines collaborative decision-making arrangements when addressing problems that span the competency, authority and responsibility of different elements of the force. As an optimal approach to decision-making depends upon the nature of the problem, a model is developed that incorporates contingency factors of task uncertainty and task interdependence. The model draws upon organisational and decision science literature to reflect coordination and specialisation requirements in conceptual terms of integration and differentiation of decision processes and behaviour.

The paper reports on the conduct of a laboratory experiment to test the research model, in which decision-makers use a tool suite to collaborate with commanders from other parts of the organisation to solve time-critical problems. Within this sense and respond environment, controlled variations of the nature of the problem, level of prescription used in the decision aid, collaborative approach and cooperativeness of collaborators were applied to test five research propositions. The paper presents and elaborates upon the findings of the experiment.

Outline

Background
Decision Models from the Literature
Differentiation and Integration in C2
The Collaborative Decision Model
Research Propositions
Research Design and Implementation of the Experiment
A Game Theory Variation
Findings
  Prescriptive Decision-Making
  Value of Collaboration in Complex Tasks
  Targeted versus Inclusive Collaboration
  Collaboration and Innovation
  Strength of Relationships
Conclusion