Changes in today’s modern world due to advancements in technology, flexible work arrangements, and the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic have propelled the adoption of virtual teaming across industries and organizations. However, although recent decades have witnessed a myriad of studies investigating the inputs, processes, and outputs of virtual teaming, the role of context (aside from degree of virtuality) has been overlooked despite its critical impacts on virtual teaming success. Additionally, much of the work investigating tie formation does so from a static perspective, whereby ties form and are stable over time; however, this ignores the possibility of relationship changes and team dynamics, obscuring the reality of social relationship dynamics. To address these shortcomings, this research program advances a complex systems approach and leverages dynamic network analytics to explain tie formation in virtual teams over time by investigating the impact of contextual influences for actors in a multimodal meta-network. In this presentation, I will discuss 1) our theoretical meta-network framework for examining the impact of contextual influences on virtual tie formation, 2) initial results from a pilot study examining how context impacts virtual tie formation in a sample of 126 international virtual teams ($N = 630$ participants), and 3) our plans for creating a virtual platform for investigating contextual influences on virtual teaming to create comprehensive testing data for our full theoretical model. Our work aims to advance a contextual perspective of virtual teaming to promote effective social dynamics in virtual environments.

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