The Economic Effects of CMC on the Organization of Learning

David Annand
Centre for Information and Communication Studies
Athabasca University
Definition of CMC

- E-mail
- Computer conferencing
- Informatics
Overview

- Peters (1983): distance education institutions industrialize knowledge production
- Industrialization produces efficiencies and cost savings
- CMC de-industrializes the current Athabasca University homestudy model
- Instructional costs can be expected to increase
MBA, MDE Adaptation Strategies

- Higher tuition fees
- Greater budget flexibility at their inception
- CMC-based programs only
Economic Effects on B.Comm./ViTAL Development

- Need to maintain large enrollment base in traditional homestudy mode
- Two modes of instruction need to be maintained
- Concurrent costs savings required
Consequences of Maintaining Dual-mode Instructional Systems

- Lack of integration with print-based production processes
- Improvements to electronic system are limited by needs of current production model
- Faculty workload implications not fully addressed
- New instructional systems are inhibited
Possible Solutions

- Redesign for increased student-student interaction
- Reindustrialize some instructional processes
- Locate new instructional systems in new organizational forms
General Application

- Innovation needs to increase or maintain net revenue to be sustainable
- New organizations may make best use of new generations of electronic instructional technology