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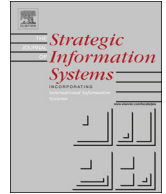
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An affordance perspective of enterprise social media and organizational socialization

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ABSTRACT

In response to the challenge of socializing new IT employees, some IT departments are exploring the incorporation of enterprise social media (hereinafter ESM) as an informal organizational socialization tool. Because this is a relatively new phenomenon, little is known about how ESM facilitates employee socialization. In order to contribute to our understanding of how ESM affects employee socialization, this paper invokes a case study to explore how one organization's implementation of an ESM for its IT new hire program influenced the socialization process and outcomes. To delve deeply into how the ESM influences socialization, we draw upon technology affordance theory to uncover the various first and second-order affordances actualized by different actor groups and the various outcomes resulting from the affordances. We then identify five generative mechanisms – bureaucracy circumvention, executive perspective, personal development, name recognition, and morale booster – that explain how the actualization of different strands of affordances by various groups of users produces eight different outcomes. Our results provide insights into the different affordances made possible by ESM in the context of a new hire socialization program and how these affordances have repercussions beyond those experienced by the individuals using the ESM. The results have important implications for new hire socialization and technology affordance research.

1. Introduction

The challenge of socializing newcomers has become an ever more pressing issue for organizations as the nature of work has increasingly shifted from long term employment within a single employer marked by slow but steady upward progression to more short-term positions and lateral movements across a variety of different organizations (Wright, 2013). With organizational affiliation waning, occupational affiliation has been on the rise. Whereas in the 1970s, workers were more likely to change their occupation than their employer, by the early 1990s, changing employers had become more common than changing occupations (Rose, 1995). Information technology (henceforth, IT) workers are among those who demonstrate greater occupational than organizational loyalty (O'Mahony and Bechky, 2006). The problem of employee flight is substantial: the cost of losing an employee is up to 3 times the employee's salary (Farren, 2007; Insala 2010). According to an IT staffing company, the direct and indirect costs incurred by organizations in replacing a single employee who makes \$60,000 per year reach approximately \$150,000 (Del Monte, 2018). The lack of organizational loyalty is important not just in terms of the costs an organization faces in hiring and training replacements, but also in the productivity losses incurred when well-trained IT workers leave a project before completion and the team must either

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redistribute the work or integrate a new member. So significant is the problem of IT talent and retention, that the issue has been rated by CIOs as the 2nd or 3rd most important issue facing IT leaders for five consecutive years in the SIM survey on IT issues and Trends (Kappelman et al., 2018).

One way that organizations may increase employee loyalty to the organization is through socialization programs (Reichers, 1987). Facing large numbers of new IT workers entering the workforce (US Bureau of Statistics, 2015) as well as the challenge of integrating experienced workers, IT departments are showing increased interest in socialization programs designed not just to train new employees in task-related skills, but also to instill a sense of loyalty to the organization in hopes of increasing the organizational affiliation of its IT workforce. Given the costs associated with hiring and training new IT employees as well as the loss in productivity incurred when valuable employees leave, the issue of effectively socializing new IT employees is of strategic importance to IT departments. Socialization is the process whereby newly hired employees learn the beliefs, values, orientations, behaviors, social knowledge, and work place skills necessary to successfully fulfill their new organizational roles and responsibilities (Fisher, 1986; Louis, 1980; Schein, 1968; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Socialization leads to positive outcomes such as better job performance, less stress, higher job satisfaction, and reduction in intent to leave (Ashford and Black, 1996; Fisher, 1985; Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003). While the benefits of socialization are clear, the means of achieving effective socialization are complex with many tools and techniques available. Historically, socialization programs have relied upon formal onsite orientation sessions, offsite training sessions, buddy systems, mentoring programs, and business trips with co-workers (Louis et al., 1983).

Recently, organizations have begun implementing enterprise social media (ESM) as an informal organizational socialization tool. Social media allows users to create, edit and exchange web-based content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), thereby enabling organizations and employees to foster relationships, share knowledge and collaborate (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). ESM have a role to play in organizational innovation, operations, and human relations (Kane, 2015). Considering the potential role of ESM in an organization's IS strategy is important for organizations that wish to realize business value from ESM (Kane, 2015). Academic and practitioner research has encouraged IS managers to develop a social media strategy based on the capabilities of social media platforms to manage interpersonal networks and share content. These capabilities are well-suited for socialization programs (Kane, 2015; Kane et al., 2014). Organizations have begun using ESM systems to help new employees learn about their jobs, their colleagues, and the organization (Bennett et al., 2010). ESM enables fast and extensive knowledge sharing and facilitates open conversations (Thomas and Silverstone, 2015) both of which can foster new hire socialization. Moreover, ESM provide various opportunities such as self-marketing and relationship building that extend beyond the embedded functions and features of the technology and that may hold important ramifications for new hire socialization and, in essence, make the socialization process an "open" one. Much as ESM has been shown to enable open strategizing with a resultant sense of community and stronger organizational commitment (Hutter et al., 2017), ESM may enable open socialization wherein active participation may result in a strong sense of community and commitment.

However, the multivocality enabled through ESM in which more voices are heard and more messages are generated (Huang et al., 2013, 2015) may shift the control of organizational communication away from central, largely senior, sources to employees who have access to, and choose to engage with, the ESM. While such participation changes the rhetorical practice of organizations, in a sense democratizing the practice (Huang et al., 2013), it may also create conflicts and tensions (Huang et al., 2015). For example, in the context of open strategy, ESM has been shown to create tensions between the participatory practices of the technology and the existing managerial practices (Baptista et al., 2017). Such tensions might also be created in the application of ESM to organizational socialization practices. Formal socialization programs have been carefully scripted by senior management to convey a desired organizational message, culture, and mission. The introduction of ESM as informal socialization tools has the potential to threaten this careful scripting and disrupt the cultural norms of the organization. ESM thus have both the potential to foster a greater sense of community and organizational commitment, but also the potential to create tensions. Given the strategic importance of socialization in the current organizational context of decreasing organizational commitment marked by frequent job changes, ESM for socialization are strategically important systems and must be mindfully implemented in order to produce effective results.

Despite the strategic importance of ESM systems in organizations (Gartner Inc, 2014; Kane, 2015) and the strategic importance of attracting, training and retaining a skilled IT workforce (Kappelman et al., 2018), few studies to date have investigated the use of ESM for employee socialization (VanOsch and Coursaris, 2014). In order to contribute to our understanding of how ESM affects employee socialization, this paper invokes a case study of an organization that had recently incorporated ESM into its IT new hire program. Drawing upon technology affordance theory as our lens, we address the following research question: how do ESM affordances influence the socialization of IT new hires? This paper is organized as follows. We first provide the theoretical foundation. We then present the method, a case description and the analysis followed by the implications, limitations, and conclusion.

2. Theoretical foundation

Our investigation draws from organizational socialization research (Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979) and from the technology affordance perspective of information systems (Majchrzak et al., 2013). The research on organizational socialization informs our understanding of the socialization process. We then apply the technology affordance perspective as the theoretical foundation for understanding how and why ESM may alter socialization processes and outcomes.

2.1. Organizational socialization

Organizational socialization is a learning process wherein newly hired employees acquire the requisite knowledge, skills, values, and norms to enable them to perform their roles in their organization (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011; Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Fisher,

1986; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Four elements comprise the socialization process: task mastery (learning how to perform one's job), role clarification (gaining an understanding of one's job), acculturation (adjusting to the organization's culture), and social integration (developing relationships with others in the organization, especially peers and superiors) (Morrison, 1993). Effective socialization practices are those that enable newly hired individuals (henceforth, new hires) to achieve proximal outcomes of self-efficacy, role clarity, knowledge of organizational culture, and a sense of belongingness (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003).

The socialization process can take place formally via institutionalized socialization and training programs as well as informally through interactions among employees and observation. Indeed, how one is socialized is as important as the content of socialization (Ashforth et al., 2007) and the initial socialization experience has implications for perceptions, behaviors and attitudes that remain throughout an individual's employment in the organization (Fisher, 1986; Wesson and Gogus, 2005). As the importance of informal socialization practices became recognized and as the organizations into which individuals were being socialized became increasingly characterized by distributed teams and virtual communities, the potential importance of information technology in socialization processes began to receive research attention.

IT has been shown to play an important role in not only the initial socialization into a group, but also in the ongoing socialization that is particularly important in distributed and/or virtual settings (Oshri et al., 2007). According to Oshri et al. (2007), difficulties in sharing norms, attitudes, and behaviors can be alleviated by the use of electronic communication and collaboration tools before, during and after face-to-face meetings. For example, video-conferences can be used to introduce new team members to each other, which may serve as an important socialization tool prior to a face-to-face meeting of the team whereas email may be used to clarify key points both before and after face-to-face encounters. Some research indicates that the formation of virtual communities can assist in the socialization of employees. In this case, the role of IT is to enable communication and knowledge sharing which facilitate learning, identity formation, and relationship development (Allee, 2000; Brown and Duguid, 2000; Chang et al., 2009; Wasko and Faraj, 2005; Wenger et al., 2002), all of which are considered essential components of socialization. To date, the research on IT in socialization has largely focused on traditional communication and collaboration tools (e.g., email, video conferencing, intranets, on-line chats) (Oshri et al., 2007) and on knowledge-sharing platforms (Brown and Duguid, 2000; Chang et al., 2009). IT use in these studies has focused on individuals' behaviors (e.g., information seeking vs. contribution) and the content of information exchange (such as questions, internal documents, and clarifications). To further advance our understanding of the role of IT in socialization, we investigate a new technology being used for socialization (ESM). Our research seeks to uncover the mechanisms through which ESM influences the socialization processes and socialization outcomes of organizational new hires. In order to delve deeply into the question of how ESM influences organizational socialization, we draw from the theory of technology affordance.

2.2. Technology affordances perspective

In the IS literature (e.g., Kane et al., 2011; Leonardi, 2011; Markus and Silver, 2008), affordances refer to possibilities for action offered to an individual by an object (Volkoff and Strong, 2013). An affordance is a property of the relationship between an actor and an object (Volkoff and Strong, 2013) and thus, represents an opportunity for action (Hutchby, 2001; Stoffregen, 2003). One affordance arising from the relation between a user and a technology can provide multiple affordances and produce multiple outcomes (Treem and Leonardi, 2012; Volkoff and Strong, 2013). In the same manner, the interaction between the user and the technology can afford actions that create hindrances.

In spite of its growing prevalence in IS studies, IS researchers have yet to agree on how to distinguish technology affordance from technology use. The term affordances has been described in manifold ways such as: "what is offered, provided, or furnished to someone or something by an object," "a property of the relationship between an object and an actor which is defined as an opportunity for action," "the potential for behaviors associated with achieving an immediate concrete outcome," (all the above from Volkoff and Strong, 2013, pp. 822-823), "the action potential that can be taken given a technology" (Majchrzak et al., 2013, p. 39), "a relational construct linking the capabilities afforded by technology artifacts to the actors' purposes" (Faraj and Azad, 2012, p. 26), "the possibilities of using select features or combinations of features in a way meaningful to the user's goals, abilities, and line of action" (Faraj and Azad, 2012, p. 26), and as something "constituted in relationships between people and the materiality of the things with which they come in contact" (Treem and Leonardi, 2012, p. 146). These views of affordance emphasize that affordance is an action (or potential for action until it has been actualized) and that it is a fundamentally different perspective than merely looking at technology use or technology feature use.

However, in spite of this conceptual separation of use and affordances in word, in practice, much of the IS affordance research does not sufficiently distinguish between features, use, and action. Treem and Leonardi (2012), for example, describe four affordances of social media: persistence, visibility, editability, and association. However, these are not actions. Rather, these are attributes of the technology. Other affordances research mingles the concepts of feature use and affordance. For example, Majchrzak and Markus (2013) assign the affordance label "metavoicing" to the action of "reacting online to others' presence, profiles, content and activities." Yet reacting online via voting or commenting or other social media features is a direct use of the features of social media. Similarly, when describing electronic health record (EHR) affordances, Strong et al. (2014) label as an affordance the "capturing and archiving digital data about patients", yet capturing and archiving data are using EHR features to capture and record data. Likewise, they label "accessing and using patient information anytime from anywhere" as an affordance whereas these are again direct uses of system features, as is "monitoring organizational operations." Moreover, the literature on affordance has been inconsistent in carefully distinguishing the outcome of affordance actualization from the affordance itself. For example, Strong et al. (2014) identify "capturing and archiving digital data" and "standardizing data, processes, and roles" as EHR affordances. They then identify as

outcomes the fact that “digital data about patients are captured and archived” and that “data, processes, or roles are standardized”. The outcomes are the same as the affordances. Because of the failure to meticulously distinguish use from affordances and affordances from outcomes, the result is that the distinction between use, affordances, and outcomes becomes muddled.

To clarify our position on these conceptual distinctions, we provide an example of commuting to work. One might choose to ride a train to commute to work. Riding the train is the equivalent of using the technology. In this case, the technology in question (e.g., the train) is an object that moves. By definition, to “ride” is to be carried by an object that moves. As one uses the technology (e.g., rides the train), one might engage in various affordances, such as working, sleeping, meditating, or conversing with another passenger. These affordances are possible by virtue of the fact that the individual chose to ride the train (e.g., use the technology). One could achieve these same affordances via other means, such as if one took a bus or a taxi to work and one could also achieve these affordances without going to work at all. However, if the goal is to get to work and one takes advantage of a moving object to get to work (e.g., one rides the moving train), then as one uses the object to achieve a particular goal (getting to work), one may benefit from other affordances along the way. Riding the train is the direct use of the object whereas working, sleeping, meditating, or conversing are not uses of the train itself, but affordances made possible by the train ride. One might be tempted to say that the outcome is that the individual arrives at work, but this is the outcome of riding the train, not the outcome of the affordances produced by riding the train. An outcome of affording the ride on the train to work, for example, may be that the individual completes more work in a given day than he would if he drove to work. Or perhaps the outcome of the individual who afforded the ride to meditate is that this individual arrives at work in a relaxed state of mind. The affordance lens is a powerful tool for helping IS researchers understand the choices made regarding a technology and the consequences of these choices.

We suggest that to move forward in affordance research, it is important to carefully and intentionally separate technology use from technology affordance, and technology affordance from outcomes of the affordance, in order to understand how the use of technology features provide affordances to individuals and how these affordances produce outcomes. The affordance perspective has both theoretical and methodological implications. Theoretically, it helps provide an explanation of how and why technology produces affordances and outcomes. Methodologically, it requires researchers to carefully distinguish between use, affordance, and outcomes in their analysis. Applying this to our context of ESM and new hire socialization, an affordance perspective will allow us to investigate the interactions between new hires and the ESM in ways that go beyond the use of the ESM’s features in order to explain how the affordances actualized by new hires affects their socialization into the organization.

3. Method

Because studies of ESM within organizational socialization programs are scarce, we chose to study one case in depth. In Dubé and Paré’s (2003) study of IS positivist case research, 60% of all studies they found were of a single case with 40% being multi-case studies. Since Dubé and Paré’s analysis, single case studies continue to be well represented in top IS journals (e.g., Bygstad et al., 2016; Chua et al., 2012; Gregory et al., 2013, 2015; Sarker et al., 2012; Seidel et al., 2013 to name but a few) because of their potential to discover new insights through unique, extreme, or revelatory cases. According to Yin (1989), a single case study is appropriate in three situations when the case: (1) represents the critical situation in testing a well-formulated theory, (2) represents an extreme or unique instance, or (3) is a revelatory inquiry. In this latter case, a researcher has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation. Our case fits the second and third situations. At the time we began collecting data, the case was very unique. Organizations were just beginning to adopt ESM and IT departments were not widely using ESM and certainly not as part of a new hire program. Moreover, it was not previously possible to study how social media influences the socialization of new hires, because as a phenomenon, it had only begun to exist.

3.1. Data collection

We refer to our case organization as Financial Services Plus (FSP), a pseudonym. Our data collection spanned the course of 8 years. Our continuous involvement over a long period of time allowed us to acquire a deep contextual understanding of the IT department and its new hire program and rich insights into the interactions of new hires with the ESM.

Data collection consisted of face-to-face interviews with new hires, middle managers and executives. We collected additional data by attending events, meeting with employees during off time (i.e., dinner and or breaks), observations, and reading weekly journals maintained by new hire interns. Since 2007, we have conducted over 100 interviews and 8 focus groups with 50 of FSP’s professional IT and human resource employees.

Table 1
Interviewee demographics.

Role	No. interviewed	No. of Interviews	Gender	Experience at FSP	Level of seniority
IT Interns	6	8	4 males/2 females	< 3 months	Low
IT New Hires	25	40	22 males/3 females	< 3 years	Low
IT Managers	11	33	6 males/5 females	15–20 years	Medium/high
IT Professionals	1	2	1 male	5 years	Medium
HR Professional	2	9	1 male/1 female	> 5 years	Medium
IT Executives	5	13	3 males/2 females	2–25 years	Medium/high
Totals	50	105			

Table 1 lists the demographics of the employees who participated in our interviews. Table 6 in the appendix details the focus groups conducted. During the focus groups, we had round-table discussions with multiple participants. These discussions were very important to our understanding of the ESM and the organizational context. We recognize the possibility that focus group settings might constrain a participant's answers. We therefore rely on the focus group observations as helpful in understanding the context surrounding the introduction and use of the ESM, but base our detailed analysis on the interview data.

Culturally, our new hire interviewees were similar. Most participants were United States citizens who had recently graduated from a 4-year degree program in management information systems or computer science. Employees in a variety of roles (i.e., new hires, managers, and human resource professionals) took part in our interviews and focus groups.

The interviews were semi-structured. Questions centered around what the ESM allowed the new hires to do, what ESM activities they participated in, what happened once they started using the ESM system, and challenges the system created. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 min. Most interviews were recorded and transcribed. In cases where it was not possible to record (for example, a few interviews with managers took place over lunch and background noise interfered with recording), detailed notes were taken.

3.2. Data analysis

Because our aim was to understand how the affordances actualized from the ESM created outcomes for new hires, we adopted a critical realist data analysis approach focused on uncovering the generative mechanisms that explain empirical outcomes. As explained by Volkoff and Strong (2013), the identification of affordances helps researchers specify mechanisms that explain the outcomes of the introduction of new technology in organizations. Generative mechanisms are the causal structures that explain empirical outcomes (Bygstad et al., 2016). Here, we do not expound on the principles of critical realism because these are well addressed in the IS literature (see, for example, Mingers et al., 2013; Williams and Karahanna, 2013; Wynn and Williams, 2012). Less well explained are the specific data analysis procedures one should follow in seeking to identify generative mechanisms. Authors describe various procedures. Williams and Karahanna (2013) describe four steps: identifying the critical events; explicating the structure and context from the event analysis; identifying generative mechanisms through retroduction; and confirming the generative mechanisms through empirical corroboration. Henfridsson and Bygstad (2013) describe a four step process of using open coding to identify key events: identifying the objects of the case, identifying key mechanisms through retroduction, and analyzing contextual conditions and outcomes of the mechanisms. Mingers et al. (2013) also describe four steps in the DREI methodology: describe the events, retroduce explanatory mechanisms, eliminate false hypotheses, and identify correct mechanism. Bygstad et al. (2016) provide a six step framework: description of events and issues; identification of key entities; theoretical re-description; retroduction (identification of immediate concrete outcomes, analysis of the interplay of human and technical entities, identification of candidate affordances, and identification of stimulating and releasing conditions); analysis of the set of affordances and associated mechanisms; and assessment of explanatory power.

Taking inspiration from these various suggestions on how to analyze data from a critical realist perspective, we undertook a five step process. The first step was an open coding of the transcripts and notes with a view towards identifying key events in the new hire program leading to and following the introduction of the ESM and identifying the features and functionalities of the ESM. The second step involved an analysis of the perceived outcomes of the ESM. This step entailed another round of data coding wherein we looked specifically for references to the impact of the ESM on the new hires. This process was iterative in that we began with a long list of stated outcomes, but then developed general categories within which to group similar outcomes. The third step entailed coding for affordances. This step involved carefully reading the interview transcripts and field notes to look for statements about how the ESM was used. It was critical in this stage to separate direct use of system features from the affordances such use provided. For example, creating user profiles is a use whereas building relationships with peers is an affordance. This step was very iterative with the three researchers working independently to identify candidate affordances, discuss them, refine them, and return to the data to corroborate them with examples. As previously mentioned, prior research discussing social media affordances has tended to confound use of features with affordances. We therefore began our analysis of affordances with a clean slate, allowing the affordances to emerge from the data. The fourth step was our retroduction in which we linked affordances into strands of affordances and associated these affordance strands with particular outcomes. Through this process of linking affordances into strands (or patterns of actualized affordances) and affordance strands to outcomes, we were able to abstract the generative mechanisms. Our final step was to establish the context of the affordances, outcomes, and mechanisms. In this step, we looked for insights into why some new hires experienced socialization and others did not. This analysis revealed three types of users who actualized different affordance strands and experienced different socialization outcomes.

3.3. The FSP case description

FSP is one of the largest providers of financial planning, investments, insurance, and banking in the United States. FSP's IT department houses 2500 employees among which roughly 10% are new hires. FSP's IT department has historically suffered from a 60–70% new hire turnover rate, reflecting the IT department's struggle to acclimate and socialize new hires into its IT workforce.

To improve the organizational socialization of new hires, FSP charged an IT director with revamping FSP's new hire program. The IT director leveraged social media technologies and implemented an ESM tool, called OnBoard, a pseudonym. OnBoard is a Web 2.0 technology that consists of features inclusive of, but not restricted to, social networks, discussion forums, micro blogs, and profile pages. OnBoard consists of a technical and social system. The social system consists of face-to-face events and meetings. The technical system consists of the social media platform. OnBoard complemented the standard 6-week orientation period by providing a platform

for new hires to get to know one another and stay in touch during their 3-year new hire program.

Leadership of the ESM comes from a core team of six IT new hires responsible for creating and maintaining the OnBoard technical and social system. The IT new hire program director chooses these leaders from a pool of new hires who have been identified by existing core team members and who have expressed interest in leading OnBoard. Core team members can serve a maximum of two years, but most serve one year.

Within the second year of OnBoard's implementation, the human resources (HR) director recognized IT new hires' involvement with OnBoard's socializing activities and officially integrated OnBoard as part of the HR's organizational recruiting and onboarding efforts. HR gives new hires access to OnBoard as soon as they accept a position so that they can start connecting with other new hires. Then, after going through FSP's new employee training program, new hires use OnBoard to continue their socialization into the organization.

To date, executives credit Onboard with reducing turnover, increasing employee engagement, and improving morale. Middle managers who had previously been involved in mentoring new hires report spending less time as a mentor, something they viewed as a personal benefit of OnBoard. In addition, executives began using OnBoard to solicit input from new hires on new products and services FSP was considering.

Whereas the organizational perspective of OnBoard's outcome was overwhelmingly positive, the new hires' perspectives of OnBoard were more nuanced. New hires reported a wide range of outcomes from OnBoard, including such positive outcomes as productivity enhancement, attractive job assignments, comfort around superiors, and a sense of support as well as negative outcomes such as additional work, stress, and social struggle [Table 7](#). In the appendix lists the outcomes with supporting quotes and examples.

4. Case analysis

We begin our analysis by describing the three types of users that emerged from our analysis ([Table 2](#)). We label the three types as go-getters, work-players, and just-doers ([Table 2](#)). The go-getters were the most active OnBoard users. They used many features on a daily basis and viewed their engagement with OnBoard as an opportunity to grow professionally. The work players were active OnBoard users and engaged in both social and work-related uses of OnBoard, but tended to not take leadership roles that demanded time and energy. The just-doers were the least active users of OnBoard, consuming, but not contributing, information and avoiding activities that were not directly work-related. Of the 31 new hires and interns interviewed, 12 were go-getters, 11 were work-players, and 8 were just-doers. Following [Table 2](#), we will highlight the differences across these three groups as we describe the affordances, generative mechanisms and outcomes.

[Table 3](#) shows the system features, use of the features, and the associated affordances. As noted, we carefully distinguish between use of the features and the affordances provided by such use. Because we are using affordances to identify the generative mechanisms connecting the OnBoard system to outcomes, we will only briefly describe the affordances.

4.1. Affordances

4.1.1. Networking affordances

OnBoard affords users the ability to build relationships, interact with peers, socialize both during and after working hours and take a break during the workday. New hires' first OnBoard exposure precedes their first workday, when they use OnBoard to connect with FSP new hires that graduated from their university (Affordance 1, [Table 3](#)). A new hire described his pre-first day experience using OnBoard as "the best type of networking you can do because it allows you to have a connection with someone prior to your first day at work." During orientation, OnBoard provides a way for new hires to get to know one another by facilitating open commu-

Table 2
The three emergent user groups.

Type of user	Frequency of use	Description	Type of usage:
The go-getters	High	Go-getters use many of the features of the system on a daily basis and integrate it into their work day activities. They view their involvement with the system as a way to grow professionally, build their social network, and demonstrate leadership. Most go-getters are members of the core team responsible for the OnBoard social and technical system	Activities include: Create, manage, and read content Develop features of the system Spearhead, organize, promote, find volunteers and acquire executive sponsorship for events Share ideas, insights about topics, and information
The work-players	Low-medium	The work-players view the system as fun and find enjoyment in helping others. They have less home and family responsibility than the just-doers. Specifically, the work-players enjoy the social aspects of the system while getting their work done and participate in such activities without regard to time or location	Activities include: Participate in social events both during and after work Initiate meet-up events Chat online with co-workers Provide others with information or guidance as needed
The just-doers	None to low	The just-doers prioritize their other responsibilities such as work, family and outside interests above investing in the OnBoard community. Therefore, they avoid using the system and play a limited role in creating and contributing to OnBoard. They view the system as a poor use of time	Activities include: Ask for help on solving an issue Search for information on a specific work topic (e.g., "how to do")

Table 3
FSP's OnBoard Features, Uses and Affordances.

OnBoard features	OnBoard uses	Affordances	Go-getters	Work-players	Just-doers
User profile, sports page, entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create personal profiles ● Connect to others ● List friends ● Market skills and abilities ● Post status updates ● Social searching: Read about others, look up people from their university and hometown ● Set up meet-ups for sport matches ● Track sport match winners ● Highlight hotspots in the area ● Set up socializing outings for after work 	<i>Networking</i>			
		1. Building Relationships with Peers	✓	✓	✓
Event planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use crowd-sourcing features (e.g., commenting and voting) to determine what type of event to plan, to choose event leaders and volunteers, and to gauge input on event planning such as time, location and food ● Use posting feature to market events and rsvp for events ● Use sharing feature to post comments and pictures from the event 	2. Interacting with Peers	✓	✓	✓
		3. Socializing	✓	✓	
Pulse, discussion boards, relocation page, maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make brief comments about what's going on at work—e.g., the pulse of the place ● Discuss and arrange opportunities for training, education, certification and study group sessions ● Lists and search for housing, roommates, carpools, and ride sharing arrangements ● List local area places that provide employee discounts and where employees frequent 	4. Taking a Break	✓	✓	
		<i>Organizational visibility</i>			
Discussion boards and house calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Search departments where IT employees can work ● Arrange to work in a new area for a day 	5. Participating in OnBoard Events	✓	✓	
		6. Building Relationships with Peers	✓	✓	✓
		7. Demonstrating Leadership	✓	✓	
		8. Interacting with Superiors	✓		
		<i>Information gathering/sharing</i>			
		9. Finding resources	✓	✓	✓
		10. Helping peers	✓	✓	
		<i>Innovation</i>			
		11. Broadening perspective	✓	✓	✓
		12. Acquiring new technology skills	✓	✓	✓
		13. Acquiring insight on new processes, products and services for management	* ^a		

^a The “acquiring insight on new products and services” was an affordance actualized by senior management.

nication (Affordance 2, Table 3). When formal orientation concludes and new hires enter their various work groups, OnBoard allows them to maintain connections from their hiring class.

By promoting interactions, informal online communication, and socializing, OnBoard helps new hires become friends with co-workers. New hires can plan informal meet-up events that occur outside of work hours (Affordance 3, Table 3). Meet-up events may include playing sports, picnicking or other forms of entertainment. OnBoard's search feature enables new hires to find others with similar interests. Then new hires reach out to those with similar interests to chat online and take a break (Affordance 4, Table 3). As a result of regular interactions, new hires meet after working hours to socialize and decompress from the rigor of the workday. It is through this type of interaction that new hires establish relationships that reach beyond their departmental boundaries.

Although go-getters, just-doers, and work-players all actualize the affordance of establishing relationships and interacting with peers to some extent, the just-doers did not actualize the affordances of socializing or taking a break. Their tendency is to only actualize affordances that directly apply to their work responsibility. Consequently, just-doers develop a smaller and work-focused network in comparison to the go-getters and work-players.

4.1.2. Organizational visibility affordances

OnBoard affords organizational visibility to IT new hires by providing opportunities for them to participate in OnBoard sponsored events, build peer relationships, develop and demonstrate leadership skills, and interact with superiors. All new hires who attend an OnBoard event have the possibility to interact with executives. Events have included executive luncheons, casino nights, coding competitions, and cross-fit workouts. All events must have an executive who has agreed to sponsor and attend the event. This rule serves as an important enabler of the visibility affordances. However, those new hires who lead events, (e.g., the go-getters) work much more closely with executives than do the work-players and just-doers who, at most, attend the event and briefly meet the executives. A go-getter comments: “OnBoard has helped me develop some leadership at an early stage in my career; it made me aware of how to get things done.” Another go-getter discussed how OnBoard allowed leaders to “promote the event, seek volunteers,

connect with the next lead, and give event updates.” This type of exposure gives new hires a chance to make a name for themselves in front of management and peers. In the words of one go-getter, “I know so many more executives outside of my department than most of my teammates do. There’s no telling ten years down the road what promotional opportunities I’ll have and what these connections will do for me.”

As the go-getters actualize the affordance of demonstrating leadership skills (Affordance 7, Table 3), they create an affordance of interacting with superiors (Affordance 8, Table 3) for the just-doers and the work-players. While the work-players will take advantage of such of an opportunity, the just-doers are less likely to participate in such events and pass on this affordance. By participating in OnBoard events (Affordance 5, Table 3), the work-players informally meet senior management and executives. Informal interaction with executives through participation in OnBoard events (e.g., Wounded Warrior, paintball, American Idol, and others) made new hires feel comfortable around superiors. Benefits of this include helping new hires approach superiors with less hesitation, relieving pressure in formal meetings, making new hires feel that management is interested in their well-being, and that they matter.

4.1.3. Information gathering/sharing affordances

OnBoard affords new hires the ability to find resources and help peers as they settle into their new community. OnBoard provides various web pages (e.g., apartment lists, roommate lists, carpools, and recommended restaurants) with information to aid the new hires in their search for housing, transportation and shopping. All new hires who use OnBoard have the possibility to actualize the affordance that helps them gain or share information. A go-getter who is “not from this area” discussed how OnBoard made her aware of local businesses that give discounts to FSP employees and helped her find housing and a roommate. The information gathering affordance was especially helpful early on when new hires were embarrassed to admit what they did not know. As explained by a work-player:

So you come to work your first day and you’ve just got hundreds of questions. You can bug your point of contact to death with all of those questions, but you don’t really want to. So that’s another thing that OnBoard kind of helps with.

This information gathering/sharing affordance was particularly helpful when new hires were struggling with assignments in that it linked them to information that they needed to complete their tasks more efficiently. For example, a work-player talked about how OnBoard introduced him to a tool that would automatically tell him everything about the databases his programming affected, including the owners. This tool automated the slow, time consuming process he was following.

All three groups of users actualized the finding resources affordance. By contrast, the helping peers affordance was only actualized by the work-players and go-getters. The information gathering/sharing affordance in OnBoard requires action from new hires to contribute the resources that helps others. In one example, a go-getter created a “Navigating FSP: The Series” where he wrote a weekly report addressing the things he wished he would have known when he started. This included all the acronyms employees use and how to find one’s car in the parking lot. OnBoard users who provide such information are actualizing the affordance of helping peers (Affordance 10, Table 3) that allows other new hires to actualize the finding resources affordance (Affordance 9, Table 3). Work-players and go-getters derived satisfaction from helping peers. In the words of a work-player, “OnBoard allows me to mentor other new hires because I can relate to the kind of things they are going through; helping makes me feel good.”

4.1.4. Innovation affordances

Innovation affordances include two affordances for new hires – broadening perspective and acquiring new technology skills – and one for senior management – acquiring insight on new products and services. The latter was not an originally envisioned function of OnBoard, but as executives began to see the variety of ways in which new hires used OnBoard, they realized OnBoard’s potential for igniting organizational innovation. The new hire affordance of acquiring new technology skills (Affordance 12, Table 3) first emerged after a technology vice president expressed displeasure about OnBoard’s social events during the workday. A concerned go-getter took this to heart and decided to organize an event with work, rather than social, purposes in mind. The go-getter initiated a coding competition. The competition challenged new hires to develop an application of their choice on a mobile platform with which FSP was experimenting. All participants – go-getters, work-players and just-doers – expanded their technical skills by working nights and weekends to learn the mobile development language and build the application. In this way, the go-getters affording OnBoard to create a work-related outcome of benefit to FSP resulted in work-players as well as just-doers acquiring new technical skills. In another example, a go-getter discussed how OnBoard facilitates what were referred to as house calls. Through house calls, new hires can visit other work areas that interest them. This allows the new hires who wish to transition to another area to learn about the work area (Affordance 11, Table 3) before formally committing. A go-getter described this broadening perspective affordance as one that helps him with his career development. “I never feel trapped, because I know I can always transfer to a new area.” He further explained that visiting areas lets him know how his work impacts other areas and vice versa.

Thus far, our analysis has focused on the primary users – the new hires – for whom FSP developed the OnBoard system. However, senior executives, who were not engaged with OnBoard outside of sponsoring and attending events organized by the go-getters, soon recognized that the platform itself could be of value to them as well and began to request feedback from new hires on new product offerings and software development (Affordance 13, Table 3). An executive stated:

OnBoard is a good sounding board for us as management to bounce ideas off of the young people. Let’s face it, they are highly educated and tech savvy. If we want to know something, we can start a discussion on OnBoard and see what they say.

Executives began tasking go-getters with identifying groups of new hires with 0–5 years of work experience to provide feedback and future perspective on various tools. One such effort resulted in the creation of an app that allowed “customers who are being deployed to

hit a button on their mobile phone and initiate a flow of events they want to happen.” As further explained by the executive:

Lots of times people only have 24 h notice before being deployed and they need to make some financial changes as part of the deployment—like increase life insurance and reduce car insurance since they are storing the car. This way they can spend time with their family and not spend their last hours working with their financial institution.

So pleased were executives with the newfound innovation potential of OnBoard that they further extended OnBoard to reach other users. One such extension of OnBoard is *ilnnovate*, a SharePoint site that serves as an innovation lab where anyone with an idea to improve organizational processes, products or services can submit their suggestion. Another extension of OnBoard is *Dev.Ask*, an internal website that allows developers to post questions for the entire development community about coding or processes. In this way, the initial affordances of OnBoard that were actualized by the new hires, namely the networking and visibility affordances, triggered an interest in senior executives to enable other affordances through OnBoard that led to outcomes that were far removed from the initial desire to socialize new hires with OnBoard.

4.1.5. The interacting effects of affordances

Identifying the single affordances of OnBoard serves as the first step in understanding how the actualization of affordances in OnBoard affects new hires' socialization into the organization. Considering that multiple affordances are present at the same time, it is important to understand the nature of their relationships (Strong et al., 2014). Consistent with Strong et al. (2014), certain affordances, later termed “higher-level” by Bygstad et al. (2016), can only be actualized after basic affordances. We refer to these as first-order and second-order affordances to highlight that the second-order affordances cannot be actualized until the first order affordances have been actualized and to avoid implying that “basic” affordances are somehow easier or simpler to actualize than “higher-order” ones because in our case, this is not found to be true. The first-order affordances were no easier or simpler to activate than the second-order nor did the second-order affordances demand any higher level of thinking or perception to activate. In our case, the interacting with peers, demonstrating leadership, and participating in OnBoard events acted as first-order affordances. The actualization of these first-order affordances then allowed new hires to actualize second-order affordances, which collectively resulted in outcomes. As described in Table 4 (and Table 7 in the Appendix) and explained in the following section, strands of first and second order affordances abstract into generative mechanisms that explain how the affordances lead to the outcomes (see Table 5 for a summary of the outcomes).

We next explain these strands of interacting affordances and the generative mechanisms they form as well as the outcomes that the generative mechanisms explain.

4.2. Generative mechanisms

4.2.1. Bureaucracy circumvention

Interacting with peers is a first-order affordance that makes several other affordances possible, including building relationships, finding resources, and helping peers. Together, these affordances explain the outcome of productivity enhancement through the generative mechanism we refer to as “bureaucracy circumvention” (see Table 4). Many large companies face a similar bureaucratic structure with rigid policies, procedures and hierarchies to follow. The bureaucracy circumvention mechanism is not about violating

Table 4
Generative Mechanisms, Affordances, and Outcomes.

Generative mechanisms	First-order affordances	Second-order affordances	Outcomes	User type
Bureaucracy Circumvention	* Interacting with Peers	* Building Relationships with Peers * Finding Resources * Helping Peers	● Productivity Enhancement	All 3
Executive Perspective	* Interacting with Peers * Participating in OnBoard Events	* Building Relationships with Peers * Building Relationships with Superiors * Helping Peers	● Cultural Understanding	GGs and WPs
Personal Development	* Demonstrating Leadership * Participating in OnBoard Events	* Building Relationships with Peers * Building Relationships with Superiors * Finding Resources * Helping Peers * Acquiring Insights on New Products/Services	● Productivity Enhancement ● Attractive Job Assignments ● Comfort around Superiors	All 3 GGs, WPs GGs, WPs
Name Recognition	* Demonstrating Leadership * Participating in OnBoard Events	* Building Relationships with Peers * Building Relationships with Superiors * Socializing * Helping Peers * Acquiring New Job Skills	● Comfort around Superiors ● Additional Work ● Stress ● Social Struggle	GGs, WPs GGs GGs GGs, JDs
Morale Booster	* Demonstrating Leadership * Interacting with Peers * Participating in OnBoard Events	* Building Relationships with Peers * Building Relationships with Superiors * Finding Resources * Helping Peers * Socializing * Taking a Social Break	● Cultural Understanding ● Sense of Social Support	GGs, WPs All 3

Key: GG: Go-Getters WP: Work-Players JD: Just-Doers.

Table 5
Outcomes.

Outcome	Quote/example	User type
1. Productivity enhancement	A work-player working on a recruitment video could not use video or camera equipment in the building without permission, which “often took weeks because security is thorough.” The new hire was able to reach out to a peer he met through OnBoard and within days his video request was approved.	All 3
2. Additional work	A go-getter had to work on all of the images on the OnBoard site. This led to the creation of a Geocaching site, where she spent time creating rollover graphics. She stated: “this is all done outside of my regular working hours.”	GGs
3. Attractive job assignments	A go-getter described his experience of meeting an executive at an OnBoard event, who then asked him to run the United Way campaign because of his experience with OnBoard. A work-player got transferred to the coveted mobile development group after winning an On-Board coding competition.	GGs, WPs
4. Stress	A go-getter discussed his stress of balancing OnBoard with work: “our managers support OnBoard, but we understand that our job is #1 and OnBoard is #2; OnBoard is volunteer work so OnBoard can get a little stressful for us because it takes a lot of time when an event comes up.” A go-getter discussed his supervisor finding out he was doing extra graphics work for a senior executive he met through OnBoard. His boss explained, “I didn’t know you were doing that.”	GGs
5. Social struggle	A go-getter described his frustration by stating: “it is hard to satisfy everyone; they [new hire peers] complain about events or voice how we could have done something better. I am like if you want to complain put on an event yourself.”	GGs, JDs
6. Sense of social support	A go-getter relied on OnBoard people to support her and listen to what she is going through and commented: “I was stressed about when a server was going to be ready for my job. We were working long hours to complete the project. Rather than going through the whole internal process, I was able to instant message my contact. He put me at ease and then I stopped stressing.”	All 3
7. Comfort around superiors	A work-player stated: “I get to know executives on a personal level that makes it easier to present in front of them during formal meetings; I learn how to better communicate with them.”	GGs, WPs
8. Cultural understanding	A work-player described that his experience volunteering side by side with executives at Wounded Warriors helped him understand OnBoard’s mission and its customers. He stated, “now more than ever I understand why I need to build the video system that will allow our customers to interact with loan officers from conveniently located branches.”	GGs, WPs

policies, but rather accelerating the response time by knowing who in the company is able to help. In the examples below, we explain how the four affordances comprising this strand of affordances leads to the outcome of productivity enhancement via the bureaucracy circumvention mechanism.

New hires gave several examples of productivity enhancement made possible through their affordance of OnBoard. On one occasion, a go-getter who was trying to meet a deadline for a database modification (e.g., table structure, permissions, and other) circumvented the standard process by reaching out to someone he knew personally through OnBoard. This simplified the process because “they are more likely to take you seriously when they know who you are instead of just some random person coming with a problem.” This then enabled him to check the status of his needed database change. This information, from his fellow new hire, assured him that the database group was working on the needed modification and that he’d be able to deliver the project on time. The new hire was able to get the necessary information because he had a close relationship with someone in the database group that he had formed through his affording of OnBoard to establish relationships with peers. In another example, management charged a work-player new hire with producing a recruitment video. Said the new hire, FSP is “bureaucratic with a strong chain of command and complex processes and procedures.” To accomplish their work, new hires were frequently left waiting on access, permission or someone to do something. This new hire in charge of the recruitment video was met head on with FSP’s bureaucracy. He could not use video or camera equipment in the building without permission from security, which “often took weeks because security is thorough.” By contacting a peer whom the new hire had met through OnBoard and who had connections to the security group, the new hire was able to bypass the waiting process and accelerate the approval of his video request. The peer knew exactly with whom he needed to speak and within days his video request was approved.

In general, new hires report that the relationships they form through OnBoard and their ability to find resources through the peers they meet enable them to get things done more efficiently, as summarized by one new hire:

The more people I know during a project, the better I can get things done that I need done. When I meet somebody in a network or at any social activity that OnBoard sponsors, later on in a project when I need help on a certain thing like testing, I can be like, oh I know this person. I can ask him to see if I can get a resource.

An executive described the complexity of FSP as one that makes it difficult to “learn who to go to with different issues and the OnBoard alumni group does worlds of good in shortcutting some of that and helping these kids (i.e., IT new hires inclusive of go-getters, work-players, and just-doers) get up to speed in learning who, what, when, where, why, and how.” The new hires who had developed the most extensive networks and had the strongest ties with their superiors – the go-getters – were not surprisingly the ones able to achieve this outcome.

The bureaucracy circumvention mechanism involves not just the actors themselves availing themselves of an affordance, but other actors (e.g. peers) must also actualize the affordance of helping peers. An important goal of socialization programs is to equip new hires with a level of confidence in the skills they need to do their jobs and fulfill their responsibilities. This is referred to as “self-efficacy” (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011). Experiencing productivity and being able to circumvent bureaucracy in order to get a job done

arguably facilitates new hires' confidence in their ability to perform their job tasks (e.g. self-efficacy).

4.2.2. Executive perspective

Interacting with peers and participating in OnBoard events are first-order affordances that make possible the affordances of building relationships with peers and superiors and helping peers. Jointly, these affordances explain the outcome of organizational culture understanding via the generative mechanism that we label "executive perspective" (see Table 4) by which we mean the new hires' ability to see things through the perspective of executives.

Learning about organizational culture and learning how to fit into the organizational culture is an important part of socialization (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011). New hires provided various examples of how their assimilation into the culture of FSP was an outcome of their OnBoard involvement. As explained by a just-doer:

What helped about OnBoard is that I was thrown into FSP. I didn't know anything about FSP. All I know is that this building is a mile long and people lose their cars on the first day. I have no idea how to get anywhere, but with this OnBoard they have helped me understand the company culture, help me understand what I need to do to be successful, and even give me opportunities to talk to the people I need to further my career and things that matter most to me.

New hires claimed to be "learning about FSP through superiors' eyes." In another example, a work-player explained how volunteering side by side with executives at events like Wounded Warriors helped him understand FSP's mission and its customers. Reflecting on his Wounded Warrior volunteer experience, a work-player said, "now more than ever I understand why I need to build the video system that will allow our customers to interact with loan officers from conveniently located branches." Though invisible and intangible, the executives' perspective is much different than "what you get down in the weeds." This executive perspective mechanism of executive perspective explains how the affordance strand of interacting with peers, participating with OnBoard events, building relationships with peers and superiors, and helping peers lead to the outcome of cultural understanding. Gaining knowledge about the organizational culture allows new hires to develop a sense of belonging, which makes them feel accepted by their peers and superiors and helps new hires understand how to complete their work tasks within the organization standards. This is referred to as social acceptance and role clarity respectively (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011).

4.2.3. Personal development

Demonstrating leadership is a unique first-order affordance because the outcomes of this affordance also depend on other actors being willing to participate in the events that were developed by the actor taking a leadership role. Therefore, the first-order affordance of participating in OnBoard events becomes available for other new hires. These two first-order affordances are actualized by different groups of actors and make several other affordances possible, including building relationships with peers and superiors, finding resources, helping peers, and acquiring insights on new products/services. These first-order and second-order affordances explain the outcomes of productivity enhancement, attractive job assignments, and comfort around superiors via the generative mechanism we label as "personal development" (see Table 4). The personal development mechanism is about new hires experiencing professional growth.

While go-getters organize most events, and in so doing demonstrate leadership, work-players and just-doers attend these events. As a go-getter comments: "OnBoard has helped me develop some leadership at an early stage in my career; it made me aware of how to handle myself more professionally." One just-doer described his participation in OnBoard planning meetings. As an example of how OnBoard helped him achieve productivity enhancement, the just-doer stated:

I was in one of the OnBoard meetings and at this meeting I met one guy who was more on the financial side and he knew a lot about the financial system I was working on. I was able to ask him a bunch of questions to help me understand the system and what I was supposed to be doing.

In another example, the following quote from a work-player illustrates how OnBoard helped him enhance his productivity:

OnBoard serves as a way to get to know other parts of the business. I work as a business analyst that develops software that logs all incidents (e.g., problems) for management. OnBoard has served me as a resource. There have been cases where I met this one guy then I needed his help a couple of days later. In the long-term, I have an advantage over others because I have gotten to know a lot more people throughout the business than those that I met during my new employee orientation, who I have never seen at an OnBoard event; so I'll have more resources as far as contacts than new hires that do not participate.

An important outcome of this strand of affordances was attractive job assignments. For example, the winners of the coding competition described earlier received new job assignments in FSP's prestigious mobile development division.

Establishing relationships with superiors facilitated a sense of new hire comfort around superiors. The following quote illustrates how a go-getter was able to interact with the Chief Information Officer (CIO) in an informal setting: "I met the CIO at a casino night event organized by OnBoard and I was able to chat with the CIO and get to know him on a personal basis." Another go-getter described OnBoard usage as one that has helped him "make connections with executives" and mentioned that "executives came out to our paint ball event, which shows that they are part of the team and our interactions at such events gives a new meaning into the open door policy" at FSP. In addition, work-players became comfortable sharing opportunities, problems and insights with management. In another example, a work-player talked to an executive about a defect he had found in FSP's infrastructure. A manager explains:

So we have a person who has been here less than a year. He showed a defect to a full vice president, who immediately realized that

the young individual was correct. The vice president went into an immediate, rapid response to fix it. And it wasn't that the guy [new hire] is so much smarter than everyone else...it was just that a fresh set of eyes saw something, raised a question, and he was right.

While all three types of users benefited from some level of personal development, the go-getters and the work-players were the ones to achieve the most benefit because of their involvement in planning and organizing OnBoard events and higher participation in attending such events.

4.2.4. Name recognition

Demonstrating leadership and participating in OnBoard events are two first-order affordances that make possible the affordances of building relationships with peers and superiors, socializing, helping peers, and acquiring new job skills. Collectively, these affordances lead to a beneficial outcome of the new hires feeling comfortable around superiors (as opposed to intimidated or nervous), but also to several negative outcomes, including additional work, stress, and social struggle. The mechanism that links the affordances of demonstrating leadership, participating in OnBoard events, building relationships with peers and superiors, socializing, helping peers, and acquiring new job skills to the outcomes of productivity enhancement, comfort around superiors, additional work, stress, and social struggle is what we refer to as “name recognition” (see Table 4). The name recognition mechanism is about establishing a reputation within the organization.

Many large organizations tend to have hierarchal structures that make it difficult to meet executives. Yet, OnBoard affords new hires the opportunities to establish relationships with peers and superiors while socializing. For example, when participating in the executive luncheons, new hires experience an intimate setting that allows them to build trust and personal relationships with executives. A go-getter stated: “having lunch with executives has helped us with our career growth because we get to know them personally.” And as stated by a work-player: “I get to know executives on a personal level that makes it easier to present in front of them during formal meetings; I learn how to better communicate with them.” The following quote from an executive reinforces the sentiment: “the COO of FSP knows twelve members of OnBoard because he works with OnBoard on a regular basis; he is on a first name basis with them.”

Since go-getters lead events and manage the OnBoard ESM system, go-getters tap into the affordance that helps them expand their skills beyond their current job assignment. The skills include leadership, communication, marketing, salesmanship, project management, budget management, creativity, and SharePoint administration. These new skills often led to additional work. On one occasion, a go-getter with experience in website development was assigned the task of working on all the images displayed in OnBoard. This led to the creation of a Geocaching site, where she spent time creating rollover graphics. She stated: “this is all done outside of my regular working hours.” A top manager stated that he “has now given OnBoard members (e.g., go-getters) new tasks, which includes creating videos that help the new hires know things they need to do at the organization as part of an employee development plan.” In another example, a go-getter described his experience of meeting an executive at an OnBoard event as one that not only provided him with “getting to know the executive on a personal level,” but one that led to the executive asking him to run the United Way campaign. These additional opportunities were extra tasks that superiors asked the recognized new hires to execute in addition to their assigned job responsibilities. A go-getter comments about how assuming additional responsibilities created additional stress and led him to transition away from OnBoard:

I was so ready to relieve the stress from that part of my life. Possibly because of being on the core team, my job responsibilities started picking up more and more. So, after a year of being on the core team, I had so much work going on that I just didn't have any time for that anymore.

Even though the go-getters followed management's mandate, superiors viewed OnBoard participation as discretionary and time for which they could not charge FSP. Superiors recognized OnBoard's benefits, even asking OnBoard go-getters to promote OnBoard to college recruits, and yet new hires still had to confine their OnBoard use to non-working hours such as breaks, lunches, and evenings. This created a sense of inequity among new hires and made it difficult at times for OnBoard's leaders to recruit their replacements. For example, the less active new hires experienced some resentment and alienation, as the quote from a just-doer below illustrates:

I am married; I can't play intramurals from 6 to 9. There are some definite disadvantages to not participating completely. Around here, just because it is such a big company, it is who you know. A lot of the times job postings are filled before they are even posted internally. If you play on a sports team with someone, they are more likely to say, 'hey we have this position opening,' before the job is even posted internally.

Given the link between networking and promotion, new hires that did not participate in OnBoard events resented the opportunities afforded to those who did (i.e., go-getters and work-players). Yet, just-doers prioritized family, work tasks, and off-time over committing to OnBoard events or increasing their involvement. They viewed OnBoard as simply “more work to be done” or “a waste of time” and limited their level of usage. This perception blinded just-doers to the value in OnBoard's outcomes. A work-player who later agreed to lead OnBoard explains how OnBoard's core team initially alienated the new hire community:

People [fellow new hires] didn't really appreciate that they were the core team. They had their own shirts. They distinguished themselves on the website. OnBoard is supposed to make everyone equal. It is a community.

The quote alludes to the social struggle that some new hires perceived as a result of the go-getters' relationships with superiors. Recognizing that superiors provided OnBoard's leaders additional opportunities and at times favorable work assignments, some work-players, just-doers, and even middle management experienced jealousy. The new hires resented that they were seemingly penalized for not fully participating in something that was outside their job scope and that superiors wanted them to relegate to after

hours. In addition, middle managers resented that they didn't get the same opportunity to build their name by participating in social events that exposed them to top management. One middle manager comments:

I started in 1991. Back then there was a training program and they put you to work. It was up to you to stay up with the people you went through the training program with. Now new hires have OnBoard that makes it easier for them to stay connected with others and meet new people. I never got to meet the CEO like the new hires do. The only opportunity I had for promotion was if someone passed away or retired. Now promotion is more merit based and new hires can push themselves up through the five levels at FSP. And with new hires interacting with executives and promotion by committee, they have a definite advantage.

Since go-getters knew that their reputation depended on OnBoard's success, they had a personal stake in making OnBoard prosper. Go-getters depended on their fellow new hires to participate in OnBoard, attend events, add content, and volunteer, but they had no control over the level of participation of their peers. Rather, go-getters involved in this process felt pressured to cajole their peers into participation in order for OnBoard events to succeed. A go-getter comments:

The most stressful thing is that you're organizing events where you're the one whose neck is on the line, but you are almost never the one actually doing the work. You are heavily dependent on people in the community to help you out.

As the quote above illustrates, go-getters recognized that a bad event reflects negatively on their leadership and may create a negative reputation with peers and management. The following quote eludes to a go-getter's frustration: "it is hard to satisfy everyone; they complain about events or voice how we could have done something better." Therefore, go-getters experienced a social struggle in that their reputation depended on the participation of work-players and just-doers both of which felt that the go-getters benefitted more from their participation than they did.

4.2.5. Morale booster

Interacting with peers, demonstrating leadership, and participating in OnBoard events are first-order affordances that makes possible the affordances of building relationships with peers and superiors, finding resources, helping peers, socializing, and taking a social break. Together, these affordances explain the outcomes of cultural understanding and sense of social support via the generative mechanism we label "morale booster" (see Table 4). As the examples below illustrate, the morale booster mechanism raises the spirits of the new hires and provides them positive energy.

New hires provided several examples of the outcomes of cultural understanding and sense of social support. The following quote from a go-getter illustrates how OnBoard helps new hires learn about the organizational culture:

OnBoard puts on events just for interns right when they get here, then puts together the end of the year OnBoard trip, which was a scavenger hunt at Schlitterbahn. Many of these interns when hired seem generally excited when they come on board. It seems to help them not to be shy or feel lost because they are not really sure of what their place is, so I think that OnBoard events make people feel a lot more comfortable when they start by having a role in OnBoard right away and feel important, which helps them learn about the organization as they are establishing their work role.

In another example, a just-doer explains:

OnBoard has a welcoming party just for new hires, so right off the bat we had a get together of all the brand new hires explaining to us what OnBoard was, why it was important to you to know the culture here and what it could help us with.

He continued to describe this experience as one where he felt that OnBoard provided him a "support system that would help guide him and help him instead of just being thrown into the workplace." The following quote from a just-doer illustrates how OnBoard provides a sense of social support:

I knew I would have a support system here to kind of guide me and help me instead of just being thrown into the workplace. OnBoard helps in having those friendships and those bonds with people outside of your area and I think for me knowing what other people are doing, what is acceptable, and asking them questions that you are afraid to ask your manager makes it easier.

Most new hires want to feel welcomed and important when entering an organization. When new hires are treated special and given opportunities to get to know others, socialize, and take breaks from their work tasks to build and reinforce relationships, they experience a boost in their emotion and confidence. At times, the peer and superior relationships and interactions turned into mentoring. As the quote below shows, go-getters experience a sense of satisfaction from helping their peers:

"Mike (a just-doer) is going through all the same stuff I went through—being overwhelmed in the Java training, feeling you're not worth your paycheck. It's a nice feeling to help him through this stuff because it's kind of overwhelming at first."

Thus, mentoring peers and being the go-to-person for other new hires gives go-getters a certain feeling of satisfaction in providing social support to others. Both the morale of those helping and the morale of those receiving help is boosted and through this boosting, important outcomes from the OnBoard affordances result.

4.3. Summary

Our findings illustrate how OnBoard's affordances led to various outcomes for different actor groups via the five generative mechanisms of bureaucracy circumvention, executive perspective, personal development, name recognition, and morale booster. The

outcomes experienced were both positive and negative, consistent with the power of social media to unleash forces for both (Huang et al., 2015). We next discuss the important theoretical and managerial implications.

5. Implications

To date, ESM research has examined such issues as managing employee relations, balancing social and work life, managing knowledge, changing organizational culture and promoting innovation (Bradley and McDonald, 2011; Koch et al., 2013; Louis et al., 1983; Mullaney, 2012). Our research extends the work on ESM to the important domain of organizational socialization. The objective of this study was to understand how ESM influences the organizational socialization of new hires. Our study has implications for research in the areas of organizational socialization and technology affordances.

5.1. Socialization research

Our research offers three implications for socialization research. First, given that social media is an important tool in the development of social capital (Kane et al., 2014) and that social capital can be helpful as well as burdensome (Oldroyd and Morris, 2012), one might expect both positive and negative socialization consequences for employees that use the ESM. Our research helps shed light on these consequences of ESM use. Individuals who are more inclined to participate in a social media system, or who have more time to do so, reap higher rewards. Yet they are not being rewarded for job performance so much as for system participation. This raises two issues. First, their use might very well distract them from their work, or, as experienced by several of our informants, lead to additional work outside of their primary responsibility. This can lead to role confusion and lower productivity. Second, because the system use is divorced from the actual work tasks facing the new hires, it is not yet known whether the new hires who are gaining visibility and reaping the visibility benefits that provide them with more attractive job assignments are actually the new hires with the greatest aptitude for the work tasks and roles. Instead, it is possible that those who have the highest ESM performance (e.g., organize the most and best events and provide the most information) are not actually those who have the highest job acumen. Research into top performers in organizations has found that top performers are many times more valuable in generating business value than lower performing peers (Ernst et al., 2000; Narin and Breitzman, 1995). Star employees – those who demonstrate superior performance and who are highly visible in the labor market (Groysberg et al., 2008) experience a “cumulative advantage” whereby their productive resources increase at a considerably greater rate than their less visible and valuable peers (Oldroyd and Morris, 2012). Because of their importance, star employees are well rewarded and highly influential. For new hires, the relevant labor market is the internal one wherein they vie for attractive job assignments after they have become fully entrenched in the organization. The go-getter users of the ESM at FSP display the characteristics of “stars” – they demonstrate superior performance in the ESM and they become highly visible in the internal labor market of their organization. Yet because ESM performance is not necessarily predictive of work task performance, the organization runs the risk that the use of ESM as a socialization mechanism inadvertently creates stars who will not be able to shine outside of the ESM. Future research is needed to understand the ways in which ESM performance is, and is not, tied to actual work performance so that organizations can design incentive mechanisms to encourage those uses that improve work performance and discourage those uses that do not.

A second important implication of our study for organizational socialization research is that even as social bonding may emerge through ESM use for socialization, so too do social struggles. Management may intend for social media to serve as an inclusive mechanism whereby all new hires may establish relationships, but because relationships help develop social capital (Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) and social capital results in social power (Bourdieu, 1986; Burt, 1995), the implications extend well beyond a new hire socialization program. Recent research emphasizes that the socialization process of “becoming” includes “becoming unequal” meaning that occupational socialization creates inequality (Anteby et al., 2016). Although the work emphasizes segregation across occupations within an industry (for example, women tend to be more represented as nurses and men, as doctors), our research suggests that this process of becoming unequal through socialization may also occur within an occupational group (in this case, a group of IT new hires). In our case, the go-getters accrued greater connections to people and resources than the work-players and just-doers and, consequently, greater power. In such a situation, power struggles will ensue; in this case, social power struggles and inequalities form. This then results in divisiveness from a very system intended to promote inclusiveness. A stream of research is developing in the area of individual and group marginality and how marginality is tied to innovative behavior and performance. Marginality is a condition of disadvantage facing individuals or groups resulting from vulnerabilities that arise from unfavorable environmental, cultural, social, political and economic factors (Billson, 1996). Some of the negative consequences of marginality include limited career choices, poor performance, isolation, and exclusion (McLaughlin, 2000). Through socialization, segregation of members in an occupational group becomes naturalized. Given the potential of ESM to both promote belongingness and yet create marginality, future research should probe more deeply into how to avoid marginalization as a side effect of ESM use.

Our study offers a third important implication for organizational socialization research, shedding light on how changes to the organization itself occur via the socialization process. Socialization research focuses on how new employees can learn about the organization and how to do their jobs (Jones, 1986; Saks and Ashforth, 1997). It largely assumes a static, and single, organizational culture into which successive groups of new hires are socialized and views new hires as the target of socialization programs (Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Taormina, 1994). Our findings challenge these assumptions. First, our study suggests that even as new hires were learning the norms and culture of FSP, they were simultaneously altering the culture and norms through their engagement with the OnBoard system. What was before an 8–5 highly hierarchical environment where work-private boundaries were strong is becoming a much more organic, less hierarchical environment where boundaries between work and private life are more porous. Consequently,

future new hires will learn norms that are quite different from the norms that the previous new hires were learning. By virtue of the previous new hires using the system to learn FSP's norms, they were actually simultaneously changing the norms. Hence, introducing a change to the socialization practices resulted in a change to the organization's culture into which socialization takes place. This resulted in a dual culture facing the new hires. Some new hires embraced an emerging flexible culture built around OnBoard and based on the reputation economy with blurred work-life boundaries whereas others new hires maintained the traditional bureaucratic culture allowing for work-life separation and valuing hourly productivity.¹ It may be that, in the future, an important work skill will be the ability to cope with seemingly inconsistent cultural norms embedded in various technology-based work practices. Second, our study suggests that the new hires shifted from a state of being socialized into the organization into a state of socializing each other into the organization. The very role of the new hire socialization process changed as the HR department began to observe the direct benefits of the ESM on new hire socialization. As HR began to incorporate the system into its own human resources' processes, new hires experienced a shift in perspective from being the target of socialization efforts to being the means of socialization efforts. Future research is needed to investigate how role flipping – making new hires both the leaders of and recipients of socialization initiatives – facilitates or impedes assimilation into the organization as well as group and organizational cohesiveness and identity.

5.2. Technology affordance research

In terms of technology affordance, our study also offers important implications. The affordance lens compels scholars to contemplate the relationship between the potential action to be taken and technology capabilities (Faraj and Azad, 2012; Lee, 2010; Majchrzak et al., 2007) as well as the relationship between affordances and outcomes (Faraj and Azad, 2012; Volkoff and Strong, 2013). Volkoff and Strong (2013) suggest that it is important to study the affordances themselves in order to gain a deeper understanding of how change occurs following the introduction of a new IT. The technology affordance research suggests that affordances when actualized by different actors even for similar objectives have differing outcomes for themselves and for others (Bygstad et al., 2016). Our findings extend this research by demonstrating (1) how affordances of different groups of actors intertwine to produce outcomes not just for the actors themselves but also for non-actors and (2) how outcomes for one group of actors produces affordances for another group of actors.

Concerning the first, our findings provide insights into a phenomenon that we will refer to as the second-hand effects of technology. With their use of the OnBoard system, the new hires impacted middle managers, non-users of the OnBoard system. In the case of middle managers, the second-hand effects were the reduced time they had to invest in mentoring new hires, a positive effect, but also the feeling of resentment at new hires getting to meet senior managers that they had not even met. This feeling of resentment underscored a deeper concern that they might be disadvantaged by the visibility accruing to some of the new hires. IS research has long focused on use and users as important components in an information system. Our findings suggest that non-users are also affected by an IS in important ways. Future research should delve more deeply into this issue of the second-hand effects of technology.

In terms of the second, our research shows that outcomes do not just reinforce the actualization of affordances, as prior research has demonstrated (Volkoff and Strong, 2013), but that outcomes create new affordances for different sets of actors. In our case, new hires meeting senior managers as a result of their participation in OnBoard events not only made the new hires more comfortable around their superiors, but also led to new affordances for senior managers, who recognized the potential insights new hires could provide into new product and service ideas and who therefore began soliciting feedback from new hires. This eventually led to entirely new outcomes – the Dev.Ask and iInnovate solutions. Thus, affordances, actors, and outcomes intertwine with each other and create new affordances and outcomes for new sets of actors. Moreover, our findings suggest that outcomes stemming from the actualization of an affordance depend not only on how one user group uses the affordance, but are also contingent on how another group does, or does not, make use of the same or new affordance. In our case, this is vividly illustrated by the go-getters receiving benefits that were contingent upon how the other two groups actualized affordances. Without the work-players and just-doers actualizing the affordances of participating in OnBoard, the go-getters group would not have obtained the advantageous socialization benefits like superior recognition and positioning themselves for promotion. Future research can pay closer attention to the co-dependency of non-actualization of affordances by one group of actors with the actualization of affordances by another group of actors.

6. Limitations and conclusions

This study's implications need to be considered in light of the limitations. First, the results relied on data collection from a single organization. Given that organizations use various socialization programs, our study raises questions of generalizability. It is possible that new hires may experience different outcomes in other organizations. While our study does achieve within-case generalizability (Lee, 1989; Pan and Tan, 2011), our insights may be seen as untested hypotheses (Lee and Baskerville, 2003). Future research might empirically test the relationship between the various mechanisms and outcomes. For example, researchers could compare the relative effectiveness of productivity enhancements to new hires via the two mechanisms of bureaucracy circumvention and personal development or researchers could examine other technology that create affordances that enable these same mechanisms. In like fashion, researchers could examine the relationship of the executive perspective mechanism and cultural understanding, comparing the effectiveness of this mechanism toward the achievement of shared cultural understanding to other mechanisms used to engender cultural understanding, such as company policy manuals and online courses. One might go even further to consider how these

¹ We thank the first reviewer for pointing out the two co-existing organizational cultures.

mechanisms might be useful in other contexts, such as how the executive perspective mechanism might be useful in achieving social alignment. Second, we rely on the new hires' perception of ESM use, not a quantitative measure of use time or frequency. New hires might have over- or under-estimated their interaction with the system. Nevertheless, this does not undermine the importance of the relationships uncovered. The new hires perceived the affordances we uncovered and based upon their self-reported level of engagement with the system, three distinct categories of users were identifiable. Future research might extend this by examining how users manage their usage level, increasing or decreasing their usage to fit what they feel is the "right" or "ideal" usage level. Furthermore, future research might examine whether users, once they have positioned their usage level relative to others, feel capable of becoming more engaged or feel trapped in a certain pattern of usage.

In spite of the above limitations, our study offers an important extension to ESM research. Previous research on social media in organizations has focused on such important issues as how organizations can use social media to manage public perception (Benthaus et al., 2016), how organizations must learn communicational ambidexterity to fully manage social media as a strategic capability (Huang et al., 2015), how internal social media systems form a symbolic capital that employees seek to govern (Karoui et al., 2015), and how ESM influences employee performance (Kuegler et al., 2015). Our research examines a previously unaddressed phenomenon of how ESM influences the socialization of new hires. Given the importance of new hire socialization in ensuring a productive and committed workforce, the incorporation of ESM into the organizational socialization process is of strategic importance to organizations and the IS organization responsible for designing such systems. Our study uncovers five important mechanisms through which ESM influences organizational socialization: bureaucracy circumvention, executive perspective, personal development, name recognition, and morale booster. That ESM are capable of producing such important mechanisms is noteworthy in itself. That these mechanisms enable IT new hires to be more productive and more comfortable in their new organization is of keen importance to organizations challenged with recruiting, training, and maintaining a skilled IT workforce. While our study indicates that ESM usage facilitates the acclimation of new hires into a large organization and facilitates their productivity, it also shows that ESM can create social struggle, isolation, and resentment among new hires. For this reason, managers should think carefully about their ESM strategy and consider how to encourage uses that create positive socialization benefits as well as positive productivity benefits without inadvertently fostering social divisiveness.

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Appendix A

(See Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6
Focus group conducted.

Focus group and focus	Date/ length	Focus group attributes
Core Team, Generation 2 Learn about OnBoard	6/27/ 2009, 1 h	6 IT new college hires (5 males/1 female) Each had < 3 years tenure at FSP Members of the core team
FSP employees from a local university. Participated in an OnBoard lunch aimed at helping new hires connect with people who graduated from their University. Learn how they use OnBoard and their acclimation to FSP	6/27/09, 1 h	10 new college hires and interns, 2 IT manager, lead University recruiter, executive sponsor 13 male/1 female
College recruits and FSP's recruiting staff. Learn about FSP's culture, new hire program and OnBoard initiative	4/22/10, 2.5 h	7 college recruits; Human Resources Advisor, College Recruiting; Talent Supply and Programs, Staffing Advisor; Program Manager, College Relations Supply and Programs; 3 human resource managers; 1 human resource recruiter, 1 IT middle manager, 1 executive 8 males, 7 females
Employees involved with OnBoard Discuss OnBoard and FSP's new hire program	7/14/10, 1 h	3 IT new hires, 1 IT new hire core team members, 2 managers that oversee the IT new hire program, 3 executives, 7 males/ 2 females
Core Team, Generation 3 Discuss OnBoard's evolution	7/14/10, 1 h	5 new hire core team members 3 males/2 females
FSP's managers Learn about FSP's college new hire program	9/29/11, 3 h	4 FSP managers, 2 new hires 4 male/2 female
FSP managers and new hires Learn what FSP's new hires are doing and necessary skills Tour FSP's new corporate office in Plano, TX. Meet with FSP's lead recruiter and recent MIS graduates to learn what they are doing at FSP and how to improve the MIS curriculum	11/12/14, 4 h	2 IT managers, 3 IT new hires 4 male/2 female
Discuss IT new hire and intern program and job roles	9/28/ 2016, 1 h	2 IT managers, 2 new hires 2 female/2 male

Table 7
Generative Mechanisms, Affordances, Outcomes, and Examples.

Generative mechanisms	First-order affordances	Second-order affordances	Outcomes	Example
Bureaucracy circumvention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interacting with Peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Relationships with Peers Finding Resources Helping Peers 	Productivity enhancement	<p>Go-Getter: In an effort to meet a deadline used OnBoard to circumvent FSP's standard processes and check the status of his needed database change. This information, from his fellow new hire, assured him that the database group was working on the needed modification and that he'd be able to deliver the project on time. Compared to his peers, this new hire was able to get the necessary information because he had a close relationship with someone in the database group that he had formed by affording OnBoard's to establish peer relationships. He states: FSP is "bureaucratic with a strong chain of command and complex processes and procedures."</p> <p>All New Hires: To accomplish their work, new hires were frequently left waiting on access, permission or someone to do something. As an example, when FSP's new hire director charged a new hire with making a recruitment video, the new hire was met head on with FSP's bureaucracy: he could not use video or camera equipment in the building without permission from security, which "often took weeks because security is thorough." The new hire was able to reach out to a peer he met through OnBoard. The peer knew exactly with whom he needed to speak and within days his video request was approved. The quote below further illustrates OnBoard's self-efficacy benefits. "The more people I know during a project, the better I can get things done that I need done. When I meet somebody in a network or at any social activity that OnBoard sponsors, later on in a project when I need help on a certain thing like testing, I can be like, oh I know this person. I can ask him to see if I can get a resource."</p> <p>An executive describes how FSP's complexity makes it difficult to "learn who to go to with different issues and the OnBoard alumni group does worlds of good in shortcutting some of that and helping these kids (IT new hires inclusive of go-getters, work-players, and just-doers) get up to speed in learning who, what, when, where, why, and how; knowing how to be comfortable in saying that they don't know anything about this and who to go to."</p>
Executive perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interacting with Peers Participating in OnBoard Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Relationships with Peers Building Relationships with Superiors Helping Peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural understanding 	<p>Go-Getter: Explains OnBoard's role communicating with new hires. Many of these communications invite new hires to social events like Air Force graduation. The new hires that attend build relationships with peers and superiors and help their peers—especially since most events require that the new hires put on the event. Through the process of peers and superiors reviewing the communication, everyone develops a better idea of FSP's culture. "I am one of the Communications people. I write the emails, we do a lot of the meeting invites. We also have a little newsletter, so we keep that on OnBoard and we also email it out, so that's a big part of Communications. It's important because we're kind of the face of OnBoard as far as communication out to the members of the social networking system. When I first started, it was kind of scary to click send on the email because it was going to like 300 people and copied to some executives and so forth and I'd think, "I hope this looks good..." We have everyone review everything and have it run by other members of the Core Team, so it's kind of scary."</p> <p>Work-Player: New hires get to "learn about FSP through their superiors' eyes." The executives' perspective is so much different than "what you get down in the weeds." Volunteering side by side with executives at events like Wounded Warriors helped him understand FSP's mission and its customers. Reflecting on his Wounded Warrior volunteer experience, he comments: "now more than ever I understand why I need to build the video system that will allow our customers to interact with loan officers from conveniently located branches."</p>

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Table 7 (continued)

Generative mechanisms	First-order affordances	Second-order affordances	Outcomes	Example
Personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrating Leadership ● Participating in OnBoard Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Relationships with Peers ● Building Relationships with Superiors ● Finding Resources ● Helping Peers ● Acquiring Insights on New Products/Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Productivity Enhancement ● Attractive Job Assignments ● Comfort around Superiors 	<p>Work-Player: explains how OnBoard helped him enhance his productivity. “OnBoard serves as a way to get to know other parts of the business. I work as a business analyst that develops software that logs all incidents (e.g., problems) for management. OnBoard has served me as a resource. There have been cases where I met this one guy then I needed his help a couple of days later. In the long-term, I think I am at an advantage from others because I have gotten to know a lot more people throughout the business than those that I met during my new employee orientation, who I have never seen at an OnBoard event; so, I’ll have more resources as far as contacts than new hires that do not participate.”</p> <p>Just-Doer: mentions that he did not participate much in OnBoard social events; however, he did participate in OnBoard planning meetings. The just-doer states: “I was in one of the OnBoard meetings. One guy was more on the financial side and he knew a lot about the financial system I was working on. I was able to ask him a bunch of questions to help me understand the system and what I was supposed to be doing.”</p> <p>Go-Getters: Recounted a technology vice president chastising them about too many OnBoard social events during the workday and sharing with them management’s vision for OnBoard. This resulted in a coding competition that the go-getters orchestrated with FSP’s technology fellows. The competition challenged new hires to develop an application of their choice on a mobile platform with which FSP was experimenting. All participants (e.g., go-getters and work-players) expanded their technical skills. The winners received new job assignments in FSP’s mobile development division and their application launched FSP’s development for the Android.</p> <p>Go-Getter: describes his personal relationship with a superior: “I met the CIO at a casino night event organized by OnBoard.” This experience allowed the new hire to chat with the CIO in an informal setting that made it easy for him to present in front of superiors in formal meetings.</p> <p>Work-Player: Talked to an executive about a defect he’d found in FSP’s infrastructure. A manager explains: “So we have a person who has been here less than a year. He showed a defect to a full vice president, who immediately realized that the young individual was correct. The vice president went into an immediate, rapid response to fix it. And it wasn’t that the guy [new hire] is so much smarter than everyone else... it was just that fresh set of eyes saw something, raised a question, and he was right.”</p>

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Table 7 (continued)

Generative mechanisms	First-order affordances	Second-order affordances	Outcomes	Example
Name recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrating Leadership ● Participating in OnBoard Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Relationships with Peers ● Building Relationships with Superiors ● Socializing ● Helping Peers ● Acquiring New Job Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comfort around Superiors ● Additional Work ● Stress ● Social Struggle 	<p>Go-Getter: states: “I get to know executives on a personal level that makes it easier to present in front of them during formal meetings; I learn how to better communicate with them.” “The COO of FSP knows twelve members of OnBoard because he works with the on OnBoard on a regular basis; he is on a first name basis with them.”</p> <p>Go-Getters: “I had to work on all of the images on the OnBoard site. This led to the creation of a Geocaching site, where I spent time creating rollover graphics. This is all done outside of my regular working hours.” A go-getter described his experience of meeting an executive at an OnBoard event, who then asked him to run the United Way campaign because of his experience with OnBoard. A top manager stated that “he has now given OnBoard members (e.g., go-getters) new tasks, which includes creating videos that help the new hires know things they need to do at the organization as part of an employee development plan.”</p> <p>Go-Getter: comments about how the additional responsibilities in his team led him to additional stress and to transition away from OnBoard. “I was so ready to relieve the stress from that part of my life. Possibly because of being on the core team, my job responsibilities started picking up more and more. So, after a year of being on the core team, I had so much work going on that I just didn’t have any time for that anymore.”</p> <p>Go-Getter: describes his frustration: “it is hard to satisfy everyone; they [other new hires and superiors] complain about events or voice how we could have done something better.” Complaints included OnBoard initiatives that didn’t go well, ideas for other events or how the go-getters could do better. As a go-getter user put it: “The frustrating thing about being a leader is people saying how come you guys aren’t doing this or I want this, and I was looking at them, saying like if you want it, you do it. And it was really funny that we got tons of complaints saying you guys aren’t doing enough of this and enough of that.”</p> <p>Work-Players and Just-Doers: For example, participating less frequently created some negative social struggles including resentment and alienation.</p> <p>Work-Player: who later agreed to lead OnBoard and thus transitioned to a Go-Getter explains how OnBoard’s core team initially alienated the new hire community, “People [fellow new hires] didn’t really appreciate that they were the core team. They had their own shirts. They distinguished themselves on the website. OnBoard is supposed to make everyone equal. It is a community.”</p> <p>Just-Doer: states, “I am married; I can’t play intramurals from 6 to 9. There are some definite disadvantages to not participating completely. Around here, just because it is such a big company, it is who you know. A lot of the times job postings are filled before they are even posted internally. If you play on a sports team with someone they are more likely to say, “hey we have this position opening,” before the job is even posted internally.”</p>

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Table 7 (continued)

Generative mechanisms	First-order affordances	Second-order affordances	Outcomes	Example
Morale booster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrating Leadership ● Interacting with Peers ● Participating in OnBoard Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Relationships with Peers ● Building Relationships with Superiors ● Finding Resources ● Helping Peers ● Socializing ● Taking a Break 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural Understanding ● Sense of Social Support 	<p>Go-Getter referring to all users: explains how OnBoard helps new hires learn about the organizational culture and feel supported, “OnBoard puts on events just for interns right when they get here. It then puts together the end of the year OnBoard trip, which was a scavenger hunt at Schlitterbahn. Many of these interns when hired seem genuinely excited when they come on board. It seems to help them not to be shy or feel lost because they are not really sure of what their place is, so I think that OnBoard events make people feel a lot more comfortable when they start by having a role in OnBoard right away and feel important, which helps them learn about the organization as they are establishing their work role.”</p> <p>Go-Getter: relied on OnBoard people to support her and listen to what she was going through, “I was stressed about when a server was going to be ready for my job. Rather than going through the whole internal process, I was able to IM my contact. He put me at ease and then I stopped stressing.”</p> <p>Just-Doer: explains how OnBoard provides a sense of social support, “I knew I would have a support system here to kind of guide me and help me instead of just being thrown into the workplace. OnBoard helps in having those friendships and those bonds with people outside of your area and I think for me knowing what other people are doing, what is acceptable, and asking them questions that you are afraid to ask your manager makes it easier.”</p>

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