



**“THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION III” FORUM: INNOVATION NETWORKS
TACOMA, WASHINGTON, USA
MAY 14-16, 2008**



RRI

“The Spirit of Innovation III” Forum is an international conference on innovation networks to be held in Tacoma, Washington, USA, May 14-16, 2008. The Forum is cosponsored by the Institute of Public Service, Seattle University, Washington (USA), in conjunction with the Pacific Northwest Regional Economic Development Conference (PNREC), the Research Unit on Industry and Innovation (Lab.RII), Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale, Dunkerque (France) and the Research Network on Innovation (RRI), Paris (France).

Conference proposals may be theoretical or focused on major innovations. For instance, the Forum may examine major innovations that emerged in the Northwest, including commercial jet airplanes (Boeing), personal computer operating systems and applications (Microsoft), digital technology and computers (Tektronix and Intel), cancer diagnosis and treatment (UW/Fred Hutchinson, Oregon Health Sciences), and wood “I-beams” and laminated “wood chip” structural beams commercialized by several Northwest companies, among others. Innovation can take many forms other than blockbuster technologies that may foster the formation of giant companies. Innovators in the

Northwest include many individuals who have improved agricultural and forest products technologies, created new transportation systems such as double stack unit trains and new transportation services such as express package delivery. Conference participants from other parts of the world are welcome to add suggestions from other regional economies.

The full range of innovation will only be revealed by dedicated scholarship pointing out the many instances and forms of innovation in regional economies, and the economic processes and settings in which those innovations flourished and diffused to a large set of adopters. In each innovation case discussed at the Forum, participants will examine how research institutions, entrepreneurs, financiers, and other participants in the innovation process came together to discover, validate, and apply new ideas that turned out to have major impacts on the global economy.

The forum organizers are particularly interested in papers focusing on innovation networks in regional economies around the world, including but not limited to the Northwest region (a region we define as the states in the Northwest corner of the United States plus the provinces and territories of Western Canada). Proposals about innovation processes or cases in Europe, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, and other parts of the world are equally welcome as they will enrich the discussion of these issues at the conference in the Northwest.

Innovation Networks will be studied at two main levels:

1. Innovation Enterprises, Networks, and Other New Forms of Collaboration:

Network structures are useful to understanding the emergence, development and commercial success of innovations. Often new ideas originate from “heroic” entrepreneurs with diverse competencies, are transformed into new products, then are commercialized by various types of institutions including businesses (large or small), universities, local communities, non profit organizations, financial institutions, etc.

*How is an innovation network formed by a group of enterprises or entrepreneurs?

*What is the role of strategic alliances in the emergence of innovation? Strategic alliances may include collaborations between enterprises, universities, government agencies, and other types of collaborators. When is control over activities within a single enterprise preferable to collaboration with external organizations?

*What are the roles of financial actors (investments funds, venture capitalists, etc.) in the formation and evolution of networks?

*What are emerging forms of networks including chains of suppliers, distributors, customers, etc.

*What are characteristics of contractual relationships (partnerships, licensing agreements, R&D consortia, etc.) that shape networks (e.g., flexibility versus transaction cost minimization, “low cost use” versus payment to intellectual property regimes, etc.

2- Innovation and Competitiveness Policies. From national systems of innovation to regional and local clusters fostered by policy regimes:

* How do innovation networks develop and evolve—differentially—at national, regional and local levels?

* What are some common ingredients of public policy success or failure?

* What similarities differences exist between networks and clusters, particularly with regard to differences fostered by public policies?

* What are comparative international policy differences at national, regional and local levels?

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DEADLINES

A one page abstract describing the research to be presented at the conference in Tacoma is due by November 26, 2007. The abstract may be submitted by email to any of the three contact persons listed above. The scientific committee will review the proposals and communicate acceptance decisions to proposers not later than December 16, 2007. Accepted presenters must submit written papers not to exceed 25 pages to the scientific committee not later than April 18, 2008; formatting guidelines for the written papers will be supplied to authors of accepted proposals. Presenters are encouraged to prepare a Powerpoint© file to accompany their presentations at the conference; a deadline will be established for submission of presentation files in advance of the conference so that presentations can be pre-loaded on computers at the conference facility.