

Trust in Electronically Mediated Negotiations

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Abstract Interpersonal negotiations can be critically important. For instance, individuals negotiate central personal issues such as salaries or the division of labor, organizations negotiate consequential business deals, and political parties negotiate peace agreements. Notably, such negotiations are increasingly realized and supported by electronic communication media—for example by e-mail, telephone, or video-conferencing systems. Besides potential advantages such as decreased travel and opportunity costs, however, such electronically mediated negotiations are often characterized by low levels of trust among negotiators, which in turn might hamper the achievement of mutually beneficial (i.e., “Win–Win”) agreements in negotiations. This paper illuminates both the antecedents and consequences of trust in negotiations. While it is conducive to exchange information about one’s interests related to a negotiation to achieve mutually beneficial agreements, providing such information can render negotiators vulnerable to exploitation by their counterparts. Therefore, beneficial negotiation outcomes are facilitated by trust. First, we discuss whether and how trust is in fact helpful to achieving mutually satisfactory negotiation agreements. We then focus on the potential effects of electronic communication on trust at the bargaining table. We conclude with psychological strategies that might support trust in (electronically mediated) negotiations, helping people to gauge the potential of negotiations as consequential form of social interaction.

Keywords Negotiation • Trust • Electronic media • Virtual • Integrative potential

1 Introduction

Mutual trust is an essential ingredient in effective [...] negotiations
Thompson et al. (2010, p. 501)

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Communicating over electronic media has increasingly become an integral part of our society (Hilbert and López 2011). Across domains and countries, people use electronic devices to connect, communicate, and pursue their objectives. Reflecting this current trend, interpersonal negotiations are also increasingly conducted using electronic communication media (Kurtzberg et al. 2009; Stuhlmacher and Citera 2005). Negotiation, in turn, can be central to success in a variety of domains of life. Resources such as salaries or promotions, business deals or joint ventures, as well as political conflicts are frequently negotiated. In general, negotiation often takes place when people are unable to realize their goals on their own (Thompson 2009; Thompson et al. 2010). Whether and how electronic communication affects negotiations is therefore important for researchers and practitioners alike (Moore et al. 1999; Thompson and Nadler 2002). On the one hand, electronic media provide many benefits: people located in different countries and time zones can directly negotiate with each other while saving travel costs (Morris et al. 2002). Moreover, negotiators are enabled to thoroughly adapt their plans during the course of negotiating, or to reprocess previously exchanged offers, which can be more difficult during a face-to-face meeting. On the other hand, however, electronically mediated negotiations may come with specific challenges: when negotiating over electronic media, people can experience lowered trust and less desire to interact again with each other as compared to face-to-face negotiations (Naquin and Paulson 2003). How, then, can trust be supported to mitigate this drawback?

The current paper discusses the role of trust in electronically mediated negotiations. Following a description of central concepts in the domain of negotiations to provide a conceptual basis for our analysis (Sect. 2), we first outline whether trust generally helps negotiators to achieve beneficial negotiation agreements (Sect. 3). Afterwards, we describe the theoretical and practical relevance of trust in *electronically mediated* negotiations, and portray how such negotiations differ from face-to-face negotiations with respect to trust (Sect. 4). Finally, we discuss how trust can be supported in electronically mediated negotiations (Sect. 5). Examples of psychological strategies that should help e-negotiators to develop trust at the table are provided.

2 Negotiation: Terms and Concepts

Negotiation is defined as communication among two or more parties to resolve differences in interests (Pruitt 1998). As can be inferred from this definition, one remarkable characteristic of negotiation is its omnipresence (Thompson et al. 2010). People frequently engage in negotiations, including those that take place in formal (e.g., about employment terms) and also informal contexts (e.g., when discussing which movie to see, or when to meet at a bar). However, negotiations can differ with respect to their underlying structural characteristics. Negotiation research typically distinguishes between two broad types of negotiation situations (Thompson 2009). In the first type—*distributive* negotiation—usually a

single negotiation issue is discussed. In this situation, one party's gain equals the other party's loss (fixed-sum situation). For example, a new employee at a large organization may negotiate a better salary as the sole issue: the more money the employee receives, the less the supervisor has left for other purposes.

While distributive negotiations usually include only a single issue, *integrative* negotiations (the second general type of negotiation situations) include multiple issues. Most importantly, the relevant issues may be valued differently by the negotiating parties, reflecting a variable-sum situation (Thompson et al. 2010). Given the different valuation of negotiation issues, integrative negotiations enable negotiators to obtain *joint gains* (i.e., achieve "Win-Win" agreements). Suppose, for example, a new employee negotiates not only salary (issue #1) but also the total number of work hours (issue #2). The employee may be especially interested in obtaining a high salary to purchase a new car, while being relatively flexible in working a couple of more hours every week. Conversely, the supervisor may be relatively more interested in having the employee work extra hours, perhaps because a new time-consuming project is pending, and less concerned about granting a higher salary (as the work done by the employee may be worth it or be needed). This negotiation includes *integrative potential* since the two negotiators appear to value the included issues (salary and number of work hours) differently, making it possible for both sides to trade-off the issues to better reconcile their underlying interests. Furthermore, integrative negotiations may also contain issues for which negotiators even have identical preferences (Thompson and Hastie 1990). For example, both the supervisor and the employee may want the work location (issue #3) to be Chicago instead of a smaller city nearby in the Midwest, although the negotiators need not be aware of this fact. Such a *compatible* issue also enables negotiators to obtain joint gains if they, in fact, recognize their converging preferences. Notably, however, such a situation theoretically allows for exploitation, which we describe below in our discussion of trust.

Interestingly, it is assumed that "integrative potential exists in just about every negotiation situation" (Thompson 2009, p. 75). Therefore, a central outcome of negotiations is the extent to which the negotiators are actually able to integrate their interests. In other words, do negotiators realize a negotiation's integrative potential and obtain high *integrative negotiation outcomes*, or do they unnecessarily leave value on the table? In fact, research has shown that negotiators often fail at fully realizing the integrative potential (Thompson and Hastie 1990). Much negotiation research thus has investigated when and how negotiators can obtain better integrative outcomes. In this respect, task-relevant information exchange about the interests related to a negotiation has been shown to be very conducive to attaining high integrative outcomes (Thompson 1991). De Dreu and his colleagues (2006, p. 927), for example, asserted that

to develop agreement, people need to get a good understanding of their own preferences and priorities, to communicate those to their counterpart, and to integrate information about other's preferences and priorities into their own understanding of the problem at hand.

By exchanging information about their interests, negotiators may realize that they value several issues differently, or even have identical preferences regarding a negotiation issue. This may allow them to come up with ideas about how to settle for a deal that integrates their needs (Thompson 1991). However, despite the potential effectiveness of this strategy, negotiators may be reluctant to simply share information and reveal what they want in a negotiation because they may think that providing such information will disadvantage them. One critical facilitator of the process of information sharing—and therefore potential precursor of integrative negotiation outcomes—should be trust (Gunia et al. 2011; Kong et al. 2014).

3 Trust in Negotiations

Negotiation scholars often acknowledge the critical importance of trust for successful negotiations (Thompson et al. 2010). Trust can be defined as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau et al. 1998, p. 395; Mayer et al. 1995). While our previous discussion focused on the tangible *economic outcomes* of a negotiation (i.e., the specific terms of a negotiation agreement; e.g., whether to let the employee work in Chicago or in a smaller town nearby), trust can be conceptualized as a *socioemotional outcome* (also known as the social psychological outcome or subjective value) of a negotiation (Curhan et al. 2006; Thompson 1990). More specifically, trust reflects a central component of the relationship among negotiators (Curhan et al. 2006) and may play an important role at the negotiation table.

As previously mentioned, cooperative behaviors such as information exchange are often helpful in negotiations because negotiators can discover differences and similarities in their interests, which allows them to generate mutually beneficial solutions (Thompson 1991). Exchanging such information, however, also entails risks, which negotiators may recognize: a negotiating counterpart may strategically use the received information to deceive a negotiator, or simply may not reciprocate the received information (Kong et al. 2014). For example, when learning that the employee wishes to work in Chicago instead of a smaller town in the Midwest, the supervisor may pretend that it is important for the employee to work in the smaller town, although this may not be true. Following this line of thought, the supervisor may allegedly “concede” on the work location issue and agree on Chicago as location but insist on concessions regarding the salary from the employee. In this situation, providing information clearly backfired for the employee. Taken together, although sharing information about one’s interests can be a helpful means to find mutually beneficial agreements (Thompson 1991), this strategy makes negotiators vulnerable (Gunia et al. 2011). Vulnerability, in turn, is especially relevant for the context of negotiations, as people often negotiate objectives of high importance (e.g., peace agreements or consequential business deals). As trust reflects the

willingness to *accept* vulnerability based on positive expectations regarding another person's behaviors and intentions (Rousseau et al. 1998), it should enable negotiators to engage in cooperative but risky behaviors such as information sharing (Thompson et al. 2010). Therefore, the level of trust among negotiators should eventually relate to the joint success of negotiations.

To examine trust effects at the negotiation table, recent research has meta-analyzed the extant literature on trust in negotiation (Kong et al. 2014). The authors were able to include 38 independent studies on the relationship between trust and process as well as outcome variables in negotiation. In line with the theoretical reasoning, the results showed that trust was indeed positively related to joint outcomes in negotiations (the average corrected correlation was estimated at $r = .26$). In other words, mutual trust helped negotiators find an agreement that satisfied their underlying interests. Furthermore, this main effect was mediated by integrative behaviors such as information sharing. The data also revealed several critical contingencies of the main effect. One major moderator was a negotiation's integrative potential: as expected, trust is increasingly positively related to integrative behaviors like information sharing as well as to joint outcomes in negotiations with relatively more integrative potential. However, many practitioners and scholars may ask whether the mutual success at the bargaining table comes at the cost of individual outcomes. In other words, does trusting others in negotiation impair one's own profit? By definition, trusting leads to vulnerability, thereby allowing others to take advantage of this vulnerability (Gunia et al. 2011; Kong et al. 2014). The meta-analysis by Kong and colleagues (2014) also examined this question and revealed that trust was also positively related to a trustor's individual outcome, although to a somewhat lesser degree (overall corrected $r = .10$).

In conclusion, trust appears to be an influential factor in negotiations. Most notably, trust increases joint success at the negotiation table by facilitating conducive negotiation behaviors such as information sharing. In this respect, trust fulfills an important *indirect* function in negotiations because it works as a process variable to achieve mutually beneficial negotiation agreements. Moreover, trust can also be an important outcome on its own: trust, as an integral part of the relationship among negotiators, reflects a relevant socioemotional negotiation outcome. Negotiators, in turn, appear to care a lot about such subjective results of a negotiation, and trust at the bargaining table can provide a valuable basis for a potential future (working) relationship (Curhan et al. 2006). Trust, therefore, can be important beyond a single current negotiation situation.

Given the rise of electronic forms of communication that enable negotiation, the question arises whether and how negotiating over electronic media affects trust (Naquin and Paulson 2003). This issue is discussed in the following section.

4 Trust in Electronically Mediated Negotiations

Many modern work processes are already performed via information technologies due to a multitude of changes in the environment, including the pervasive general usage of electronic communication media and the globalization (Gilson et al. 2015; Hertel et al. 2005; Thompson and Nadler 2002). As a result, people also increasingly negotiate over electronic media nowadays (Moore et al. 1999; Morris et al. 2002). Electronically mediated negotiations are those that are conducted “using media other than face-to-face communication” (Stuhlmacher and Citera 2005, p. 70). The specific media by which people negotiate can be manifold: e-mail, phone, video-conferencing systems and text messaging applications all provide opportunities to negotiate, although these different media, of course, also differ in many respects (Purdy et al. 2000; Thompson 2009). Of special relevance to the current section, we focus on consequences of negotiating over electronic media for trust at the bargaining table. How do electronically mediated negotiations differ from face-to-face negotiations, and how does this impact trust?

Negotiation research has accumulated substantial knowledge about the psychology of negotiating over information technology (Thompson and Nadler 2002). One remarkable difference between e-mail negotiations and face-to-face negotiations, for instance, is the reduced amount of informal conversation—talking about issues not directly relevant to a negotiation itself (Morris et al. 2002). In e-mail negotiations, negotiators “schmooze” much less than in face-to-face negotiations as they disclose less personal information and also ask their counterpart fewer questions about issues unrelated to the negotiation (Morris et al. 2002; Thompson and Nadler 2002). While this difference between electronic and face-to-face negotiations pertains to the *verbal* aspects of communication, it is important to acknowledge that the communication medium itself also often limits the available personal cues about one’s counterpart, or complicates the (verbal) provision of such cues. In e-mail negotiations, for instance, visual information or paraverbal characteristics such as looks, tone of voice, and so on are absent. However, paraverbal or non-verbal gestures such as nodding or briefly exchanging personal information (e.g., “how did you get here today?”; “how was the flight?”) are elements that often naturally occur in face-to-face interactions and that facilitate the establishment of rapport among negotiators (Morris et al. 2002; Thompson and Nadler 2002). Furthermore, compensating for the genuine lack of social cues by writing in a pronounced relational style, for example, may be inappropriate in certain (business) contexts, which additionally makes it difficult to exchange relational information and to build a foundation for a working relationship (Naquin and Paulson 2003).

Further dynamics are engendered in electronically mediated negotiations beyond this lack of informal or relational conversation. In an initial meta-analysis on the topic, Stuhlmacher and Citera (2005) found that electronically mediated negotiations are characterized by more hostility than traditional face-to-face negotiations. Relatedly, Purdy and colleagues (2000) showed that people collaborate more (and compete less) in face-to-face negotiations as compared to negotiators

interacting via phone or computer chat. And finally, it seems that using competitive behaviors is especially detrimental to e-negotiations. The use of threats or ultimatums impair reaching integrative agreements more in e-mail negotiations than in face-to-face negotiations (Morris et al. 2002). Negotiators interacting over electronic media thus appear to be very sensitive with respect to such behaviors. Summarizing these manifold influences that appear to reduce, or even deteriorate, the perceived interpersonal connection between negotiators, it is likely that negotiating over electronic media may strongly impact trust as a central part of the negotiator's relationship at the bargaining table (Morris et al. 2002; Thompson and Nadler 2002).

In a seminal study on this question, Naquin and Paulson (2003) specifically focused on the impact of negotiating over electronic media on trust by comparing face-to-face negotiations with negotiations conducted via e-mail. Their findings revealed several important insights. First, negotiators indeed appeared to trust each other less following e-mail negotiations as compared to negotiations conducted face-to-face (however, see also Wilson et al. 2006). Given the potentially important influence of trust in negotiations, this finding reveals a central pitfall of e-mail negotiations. A second and almost more important finding emerged in their study: negotiating over e-mail even reduced the experienced trust *prior* to the negotiation—an effect that was extraordinarily large (Cohen's $d = 3.55$)—which suggests that people's expectations regarding trust in electronically mediated negotiation are rather negative. Furthermore, the results also revealed that e-mail negotiators desired a future relationship with their counterpart to a lesser degree than face-to-face negotiators (Naquin and Paulson 2003). This finding is especially unfortunate as negotiation often plays a role in establishing a working relationship (e.g., many business contacts are initiated through negotiating).

In conclusion, although trust is an important precursor to success in negotiation, trust appears to be relatively low in e-negotiations compared to face-to-face negotiations. Given the fact, however, that many modern negotiations are or must be conducted over electronic media, advice on how to support trust appears helpful. Indeed, the reported findings of Naquin and Paulson (2003) suggested that at least part of the negative effects of electronically mediated negotiations might result from mere assumptions and negative expectations that need not necessarily be valid, but can still limit the outcome of electronic negotiations in advance. In what follows, we thus report relevant research to the question of how trust can be strengthened in electronically mediated negotiations.

5 Antecedents: How to Support Trust in Electronically Mediated Negotiations?

At first glance, the preceding insights on the lack of trust may promote a pronounced negative view of negotiations conducted over electronic media. However, evidence not only suggests that strategies can be applied to mitigate adverse effects occurring in electronically mediated negotiations (Moore et al. 1999), but that they may also provide several distinct advantages (e.g., reduced travel expenses; see below). Furthermore, as noted by Morris and his colleagues (2002, p. 89), “because uses of technologies evolve over time, it would be a mistake to assume that the social dynamics associated with e-mail are inevitable byproducts of inherent properties of the technology.” In the following, we therefore report research on four strategies aimed at supporting trust development in electronically mediated negotiations by compensating for the detrimental effects of electronic communication: (a) exchanging personal information (schmoozing), (b) using humor, (c) having or establishing a shared group membership, and (d) heightening the salience of group memberships whose related norms support or value trust. Afterwards, we also outline three potential strengths of electronic negotiation that are often neglected: (e) (asynchronous) forms of electronic communication provide opportunities for drafting offers “safely” without immediate confrontation with counterparts, which can be particularly important for non-native speakers or people with social anxieties or uncertainties (Hertel et al. 2008); (f) asynchronous written communication might help deescalate emotionally “hot” negotiations under certain circumstances; and (g) automatic documentation (e.g., of offers, commitments, and so on) as the default in some electronic communication environments such as e-mail might build trust or compensate for lack of trust in virtual negotiations (Breuer et al. 2015; Naquin and Paulson 2003). These strategies might be interrelated or work in concert in certain contexts. For example, without exchanging any personal information in an electronic negotiation, the negotiators may not even realize that they share meaningful group memberships, which precludes the application of other strategies. Therefore, the suggested strategies should be most effective when applied in concert rather than as purely disjunctive strategies.

5.1 *Exchanging Personal Information*

As previously discussed, electronically mediated and face-to-face negotiations often differ from each other with respect to the amount of personal and task-irrelevant information exchanged (Morris et al. 2002). Such informal conversation, however, helps to establish rapport and trust at the bargaining table (Thompson and Nadler 2002). Therefore, inducing negotiators to exchange personal information should be a helpful means of mitigating the related disadvantages of electronically mediated negotiations. Indeed, empirical investigations of this strategy revealed

promising findings. Among the many positive effects, inducing e-negotiators to exchange personal information led to more rapport prior to and after a negotiation, more positive perceptions of one's counterpart, more positive expectations regarding a working relationship, and eventually fewer negotiation impasses (Moore et al. 1999; Morris et al. 2002). It is important to note that, in this research tapping into the effects of schmoozing, the intervention to schmooze did not demand much from the participants: schmoozers "only" received some additional information about their counterpart (e.g., a small photo and some biographical information) and were instructed to have a brief phone call about personal issues prior to the negotiation, for instance (Morris et al. 2002). This research shows that even little things can make a dramatic change in electronically mediated negotiations (Thompson and Nadler 2002).

5.2 *Using Humor*

Beyond exchanging any information unrelated to a negotiation itself prior to (or as part of) a digitized communication, the exchange of *specific* content might also be helpful. A recent study suggests that using humor may be a valuable strategy for e-negotiations (Kurtzberg et al. 2009). The authors reasoned that sharing a humorous anecdote may generate positive feelings in interactions and create a shared positive experience, which may allow for trust to develop. In fact, using humor has been shown to be effective in electronically mediated negotiations. In two studies, some participants were induced to share a humorous cartoon (on the topic of negotiation) at the beginning of their actual negotiation while others were not, and the effects were very promising. Sharing the humorous cartoon not only led to more trust, but also to greater joint outcomes (Study 1; Kurtzberg et al. 2009). The results further revealed that the joint outcomes were higher because the negotiators more often realized that they had identical preferences regarding some negotiation issues (compatible issues), which underscores the heightened trust at the table (see above). Moreover, sharing the humorous cartoon led to more balanced, or fair, relative outcomes in the negotiations (Study 2). Taken together, humor can be very helpful in electronically mediated negotiations. As a final note of caution, however, it must be acknowledged that negotiators should aim to ensure that the humor does not invite misunderstandings or offensive interpretations (e.g., due to intercultural differences in social norms) to best gauge the potential of humor as a trust-supporting means (cf. Kurtzberg et al. 2009).

5.3 *Shared Group Membership*

Ample social psychological research suggests that group membership can provide a basis for the attribution of positive characteristics. According to social identity

theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1979), people aim at generating self-esteem from being members of particular groups (cf. Smith and Mackie 2007). This can motivate people to generally evaluate members of one's ingroup (or the group as a whole) relative to outgroup members in more positive terms—a tendency called intergroup bias (Hewstone et al. 2002). Moore et al. (1999, p. 25) noted that in an “e-mail communication, individuals have fewer cues to interpret the actions, behaviors, and motivations of their partner, and may rely even more readily on the assumptions provided by common group membership.” Consider the example of two professors negotiating the terms of a shared research project (e.g., who writes up which studies as first author). When they negotiate via e-mail, an especially salient characteristic might be their university affiliation (i.e., their respective group membership), as this information is provided as part of the e-mail address and also the signature at the end of each e-mail, whereas other personal characteristics like height or pronunciation normally available are less salient in the digital encounter. If the professors' affiliations are the same, they would be expected to engage in more positive mutual attributions—which may include trustworthiness—than when their affiliations differ (e.g., Harvard University and Yale University—two universities with a history of athletic rivalry). To sum up, if a common ingroup is available, e-negotiators may capitalize on the resulting tendency to mutually afford relatively more positive evaluations.

But what happens when a shared group membership is not yet available? In this situation, negotiators may attempt to generate a common ingroup or to recategorize the involved negotiators. According to the common ingroup identity model developed by Gaertner and colleagues (1993), creating a superordinate ingroup encompassing both subgroups allows for (previous) outgroup members to be seen as members of a common ingroup. As a result, they may be evaluated in a similar positive fashion, which can include trustworthiness (Gaertner and Dovidio 2012). Considering our example, the professors may reframe the negotiation as an interaction between two social psychologists with a shared interest in the topic of trust, which may be regarded as a meaningful common social group by the protagonists.

5.4 Groups Whose Norms Support Trust

Social norms—a group's accepted and endorsed ways to behave, think, or feel (Smith and Mackie 2007)—can exert a powerful influence on people. Do group norms also guide people's behavior when interacting rather anonymously as in certain forms of electronically mediated interaction? Interestingly, while some research has suggested that being anonymous leads people to depart from social norms, the social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE) suggests that people may actually increase their adherence to the currently available shared group norms (Postmes et al. 1998). The idea is that when individuating information is missing, people tend to see themselves more in terms of the available group memberships and thereby more strongly behave consistent with a group's norms

or stereotypes (Postmes and Spears 2002; Postmes et al. 1998). This suggests an interesting avenue to support trust in electronically mediated negotiations. If the situation does not allow for meaningful individuating information, it would be wise to make salient those shared group memberships whose norms support trustworthy behavior. For instance, negotiators may emphasize that they are all paramedics or firefighters—occupations that are often perceived as trustworthy. If such an option is available, people may thus capitalize on the helpful consequences.

So far, we have outlined potential compensation strategies for the difficulties arising in electronically mediated negotiations. On the other hand, however, electronic media may also provide distinct strengths for negotiation (Galín et al. 2007), which are—of course—important to consider as well. Three potential advantages of electronically mediated negotiations are therefore delineated in the following sections.

5.5 Drafting and Intermediate Planning

An interesting advantage resulting from certain forms of electronic communication is that they naturally allow for thorough drafting and adapting of offers, strategies or plans while negotiating. When negotiating via e-mail, for instance, negotiators can take their time, evaluate what happened before, and adapt their plans to the current status of a negotiation. This can be especially relevant for people not negotiating in their first language, or for people who feel insecure in social situations (Hertel et al. 2008). Being able to engage in intermediate planning instead of responding immediately can thus provide a valuable opportunity for negotiators.

5.6 Potential for Deescalating Negotiations

Negotiations can include a multitude of emotions such as happiness or anger, which may strongly influence negotiation processes and outcomes (van Kleef et al. 2004). Although electronically mediated negotiations often seem to hinder a trusting or friendly course of interaction (Naquin and Paulson 2003; Stuhlmacher and Citera 2005), supporting negotiations with electronic media may also allow for emotions to calm down in certain circumstances. Introducing a pause in a heated debate among negotiators and deciding to continue negotiating over electronic devices may help negotiators to refocus on the negotiation issues themselves. In this respect, electronically-mediated negotiations may help negotiators separate the issues from the people involved (cf. Galín et al. 2007). Therefore, negotiations supported by electronic media may sometimes provide a potential for deescalating “hot” negotiations if the involved negotiators agree to interact more amiably when continuing negotiations via a more impersonal form of communication.

5.7 *Documentation of Course of Interaction*

A central feature of several electronic media is that they automatically document the course of interaction. In e-mail negotiations, for instance, automatic storage reflects the default option. Interestingly, such environments might reduce the perceived risks at the negotiation table because competitive tactics such as deceptions might be perceived as more easily revealed—even long after the completion of a negotiation (Naquin and Paulson 2003; see also Breuer et al. 2015). Therefore, the need for trust might be reduced when negotiators think of their counterparts as engaging in rather cooperative behaviors, since otherwise this might eventually backfire. Another advantage of the automatic documentation is that it allows negotiators to reprocess the previously exchanged offers and counteroffers, thereby potentially facilitating the generation of more complex offers. Indeed, research has shown that negotiating via e-mail increased the number of offers including multiple issues (Morris et al. 2002). Certain electronic media may thus also facilitate aspects of the course of negotiating.

6 Conclusion

Electronically mediated negotiations are increasingly becoming a pervasive part of modern life. In many contexts, people now rely on information technology to negotiate, which brings about many benefits (e.g., reduced travel and opportunity costs). Negotiating over electronic media, however, often comes at the cost of reduced trust. Given that trust can be a central facilitator of conducive negotiation behaviors such as information sharing, and simultaneously an important outcome on its own, we outlined strategies to overcome this drawback of e-negotiations. When people negotiate over electronic media, they are well advised to include an informal personal conversation as part of the beginning of an interaction, to use humor (if appropriate), to stress or generate shared group memberships where possible, and to heighten the salience of specific common groups whose norms support trust. Moreover, the genuine strengths of electronic communication media, such as intermediate planning and drafting opportunities regarding one's own interests (e.g., in asynchronous text-based communication forms such as e-mail) or the automatic documentation and reprocessability of the interaction can provide additional opportunities for trust maintenance in negotiations that are only initially understood.

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