

**INTER-FIRM R&D NETWORKS IN THE GLOBAL SOFTWARE INDUSTRY: AN  
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR TRENDS AND PATTERNS**

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## **Abstract**

This paper presents an analysis of some major historical trends and patterns in inter-firm R&D partnering in the international software industry during the period 1970-1999. Our research demonstrates an overall growth pattern of newly made R&D partnerships and reveals the important role played by leading firms. We also examine the emergence of various R&D partnering networks in the software industry, which cannot be seen separately from some important developments in the computer industry. This part of the analysis indicates the change from rather sparse and disconnected networks into dense and well-connected networks, based on a shift in product markets and the need for new business models during the second half of the 1980s.