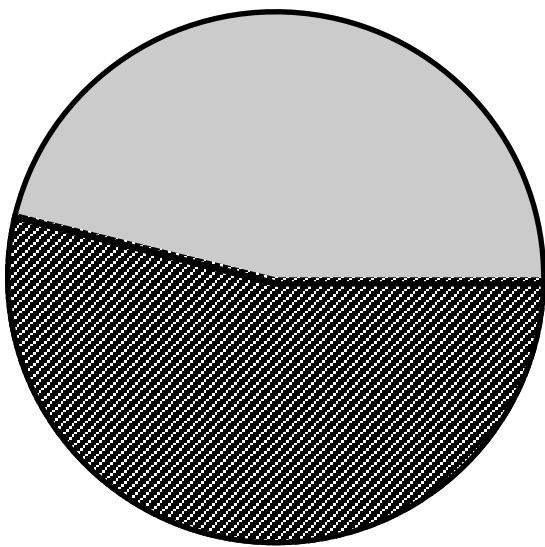# Keeping a large organization together

Solidarity to the company, not to your own branch

Example: When Tandem bought three small companies

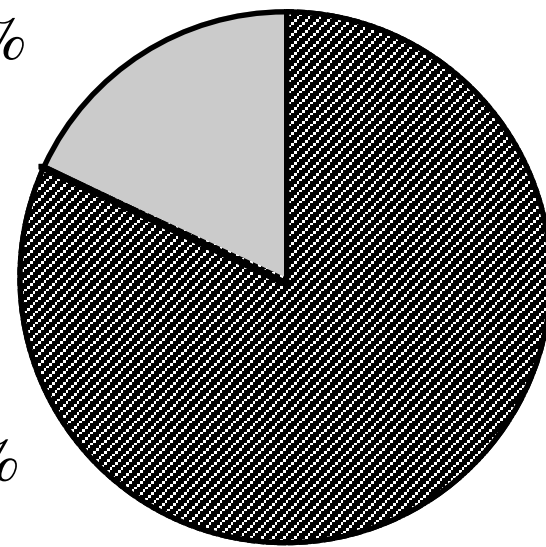Contacts at larger distances

Personally addressed
messages

Group
messages

46 % Within departments 18 %

54 % Out of departments 82 %

Better products faster and at lower costs

A revolution in cooperation and work

Strong correlation with productivity and efficiency

Example 1: A salesman wants to sell product ABC to a customer in the XYZ area

Question in CMC: Which customers in the XYZ area have bought product ABC?

People are difficult to reach

Sometimes you do not know who has the answer

Flexible solutions to non-routine problems, and non-routine problems do occur also in routine applcations

Example 2: Tandem was installing a large network of 8000 personal computers in a large company. A technical problem could stop the whole installation. The right person to solve the problem was found within 24 hours using CMC networks within Tandem.

Comparisons with other media

Compare with company newsletters

Company newsletters do not solve all the small and large problems which occur every day. The total effect of the solutions to many such small problems is large.

Compare with information retrieval systems

Information is collected from the brains of the people who use the CMC systems.

Compare with face-to-face meetings

You can attack a problem immediately when it occurs, you do not have to wait for the next scheduled face-to-face meetings
You can flexibly form new groups as needed

Example: New product idea, a task group with participants from many company departments could be formed in only one day to investigate the idea
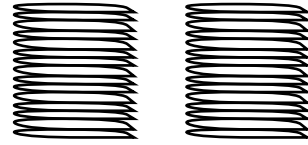
Compare with phone calls

Knowing whom to call, reaching him/her

Problems

Information overload problems

    Information must be organised to make the recipient able to control what he reads, and when

    Not too much information, too much not needed information
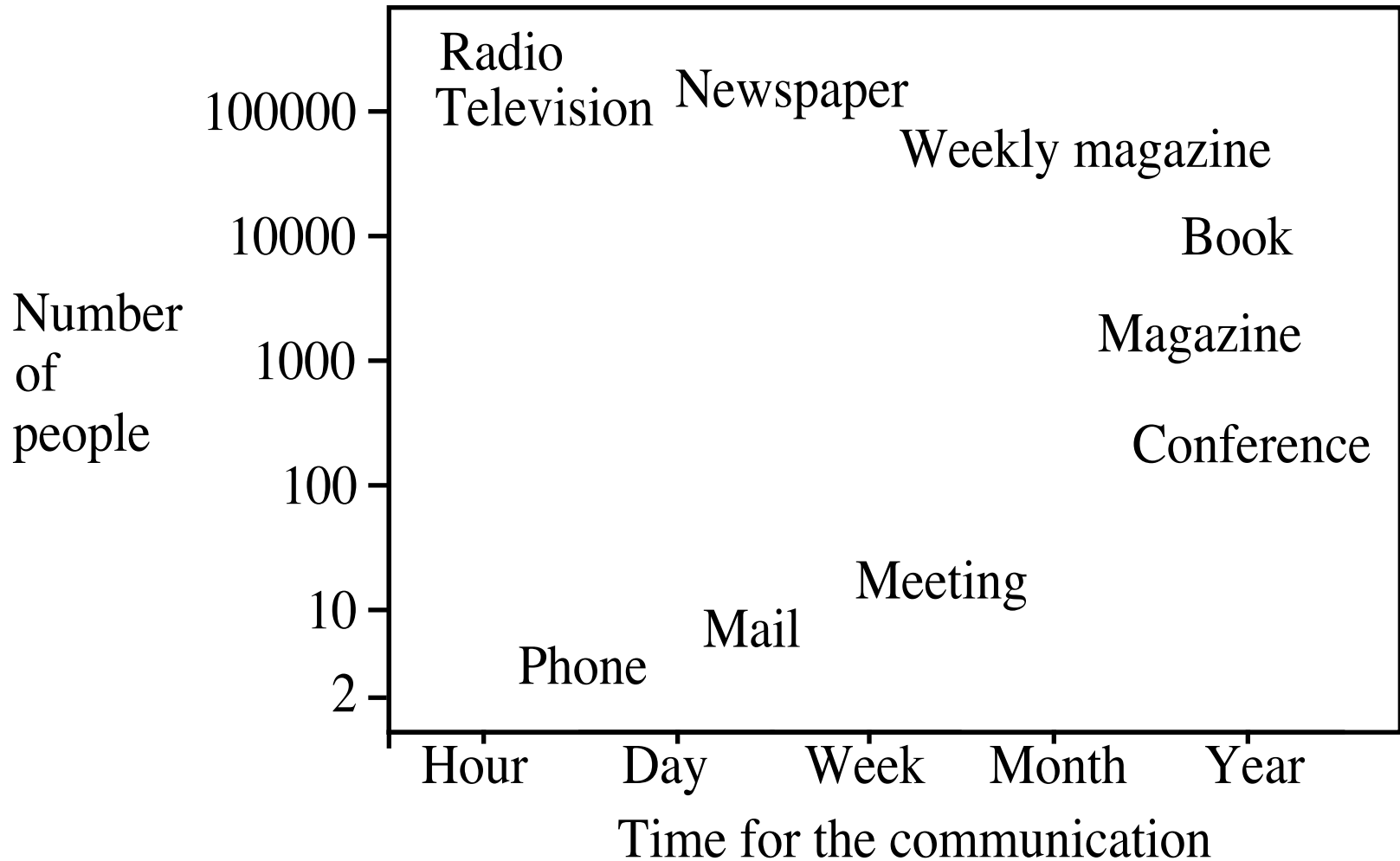
Body language, inflection of voice etc

    Difficult to reach consensus

    Difficult to persuade people

    More thorough penetration of problems is possible

New communication possibillities

Bosses and other employees

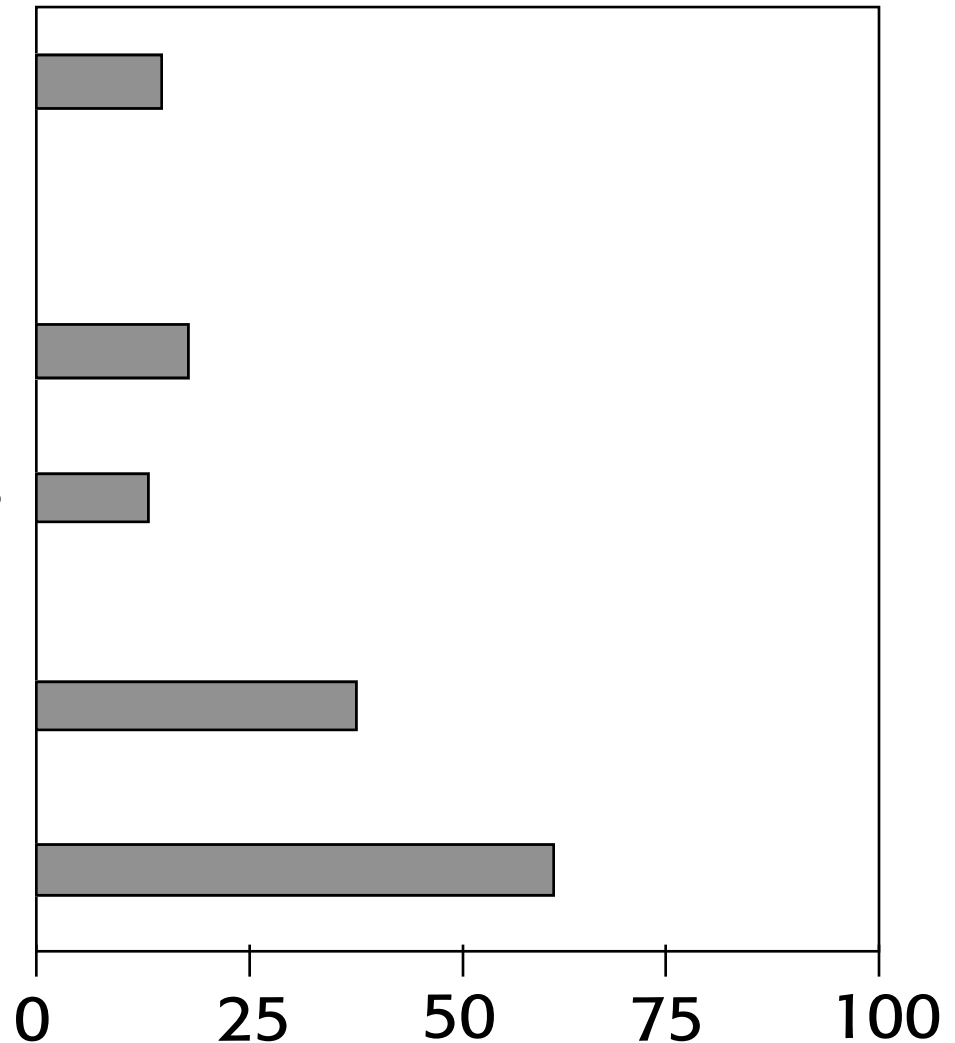15 % of all employees
were bosses

<u>In the CMC system</u>

18 % of all users
were bosses

13 % of very active users

<u>At face-to-face meetings</u>

37 % of all participants
were bosses

61 % of participants in
many groups

The controversy about flaming

Sproull and Kiesler: CMC promotes flaming

Lea, O'Shea, Fung, Spears: Flaming is relatively uncommon, and when it appears, is context-dependent

Source: *'Flaming' in computer-mediated communication*, observations, explanations, implications by Martin Lea, Tim O'Shea, Pat Fung and Russel Spears, in *Contexts of Computer-Mediated Communication*, edited by Martin Lea 1992.
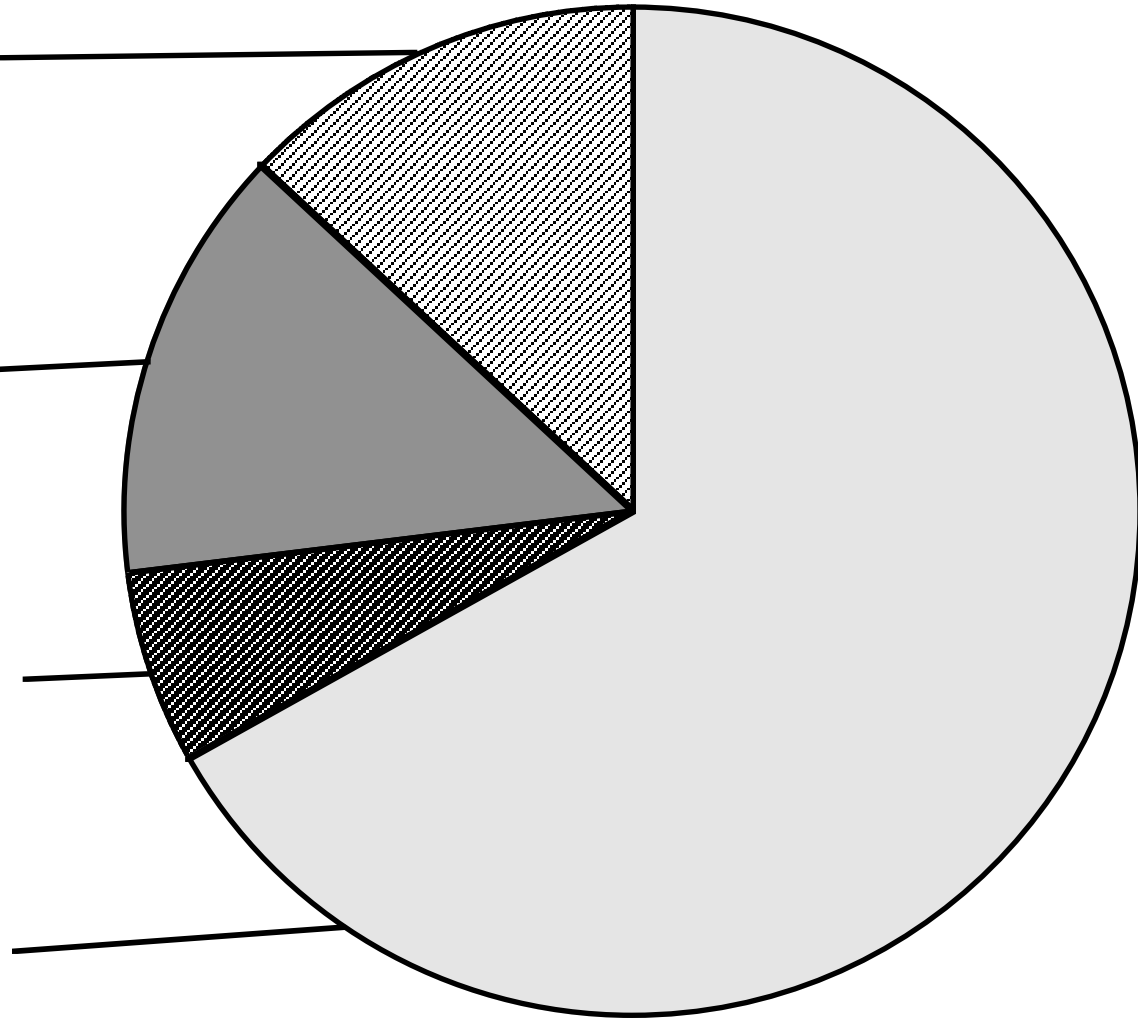
Replacement for other media?

13 % Replacement for formal and informal face-to-face meetings
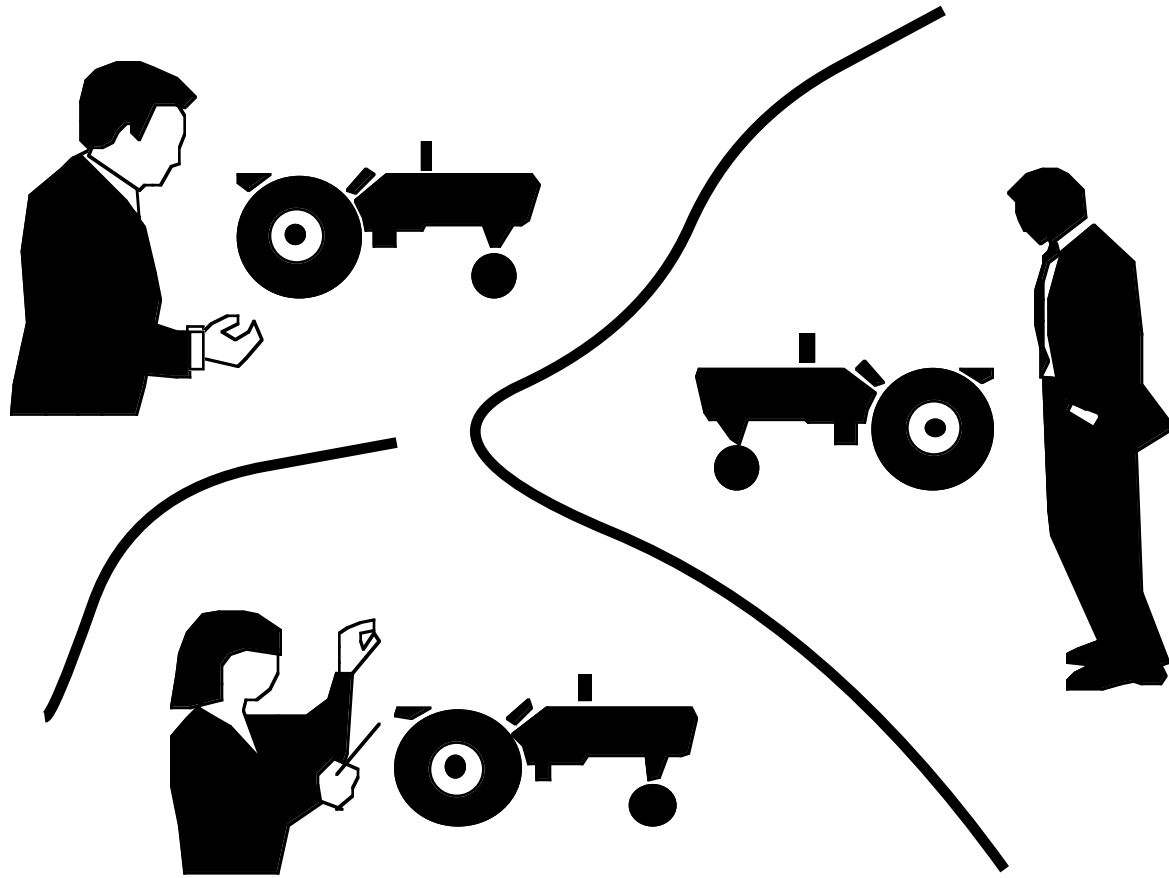
14 % Replacement for phone calls

6 % Replacement for postal mail, circulars, message slips
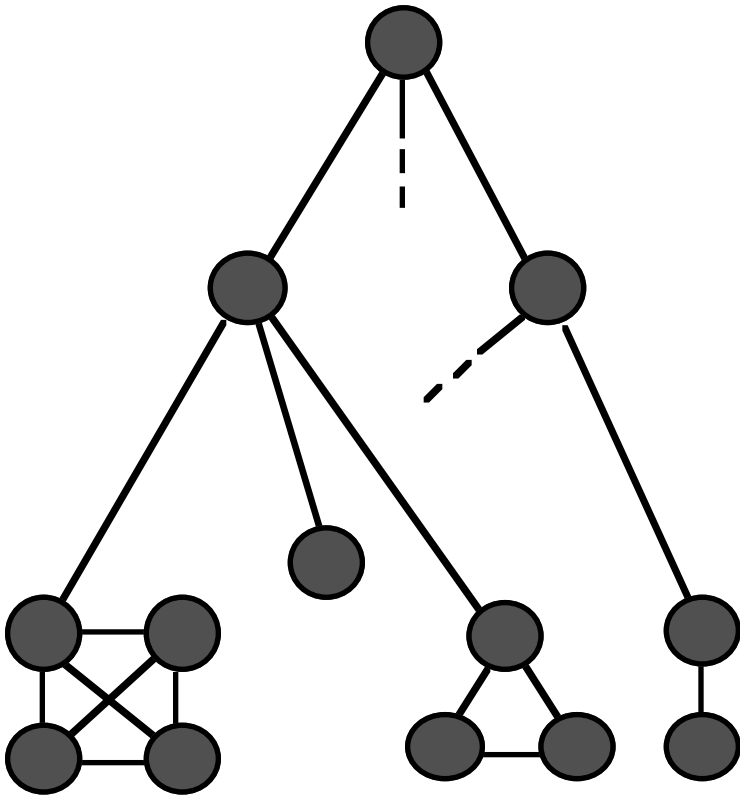
65 % New communication

Coordination of similar activities

People handling similar problems in different departments can exchange experience and coordinate their work
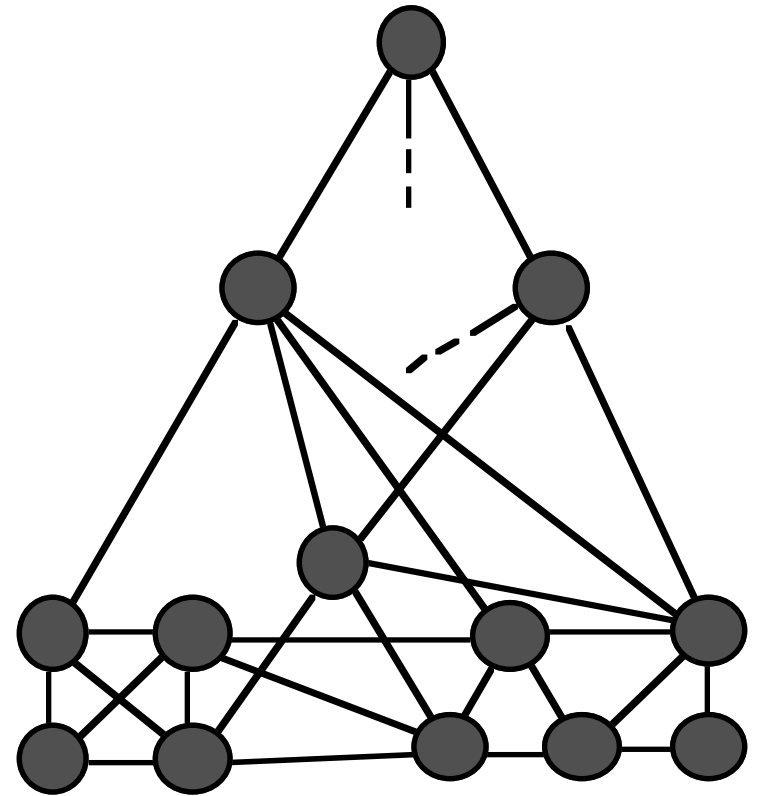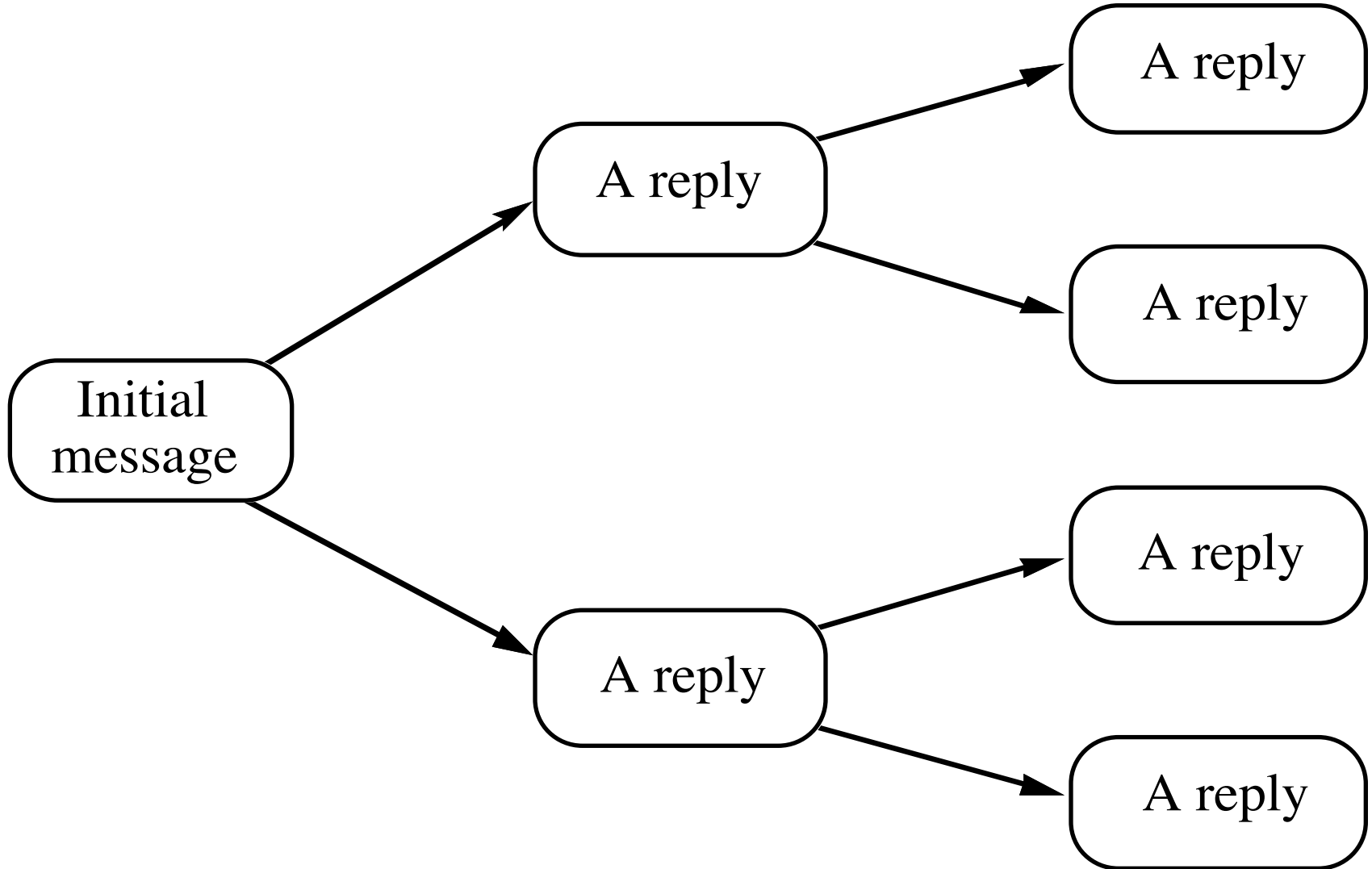
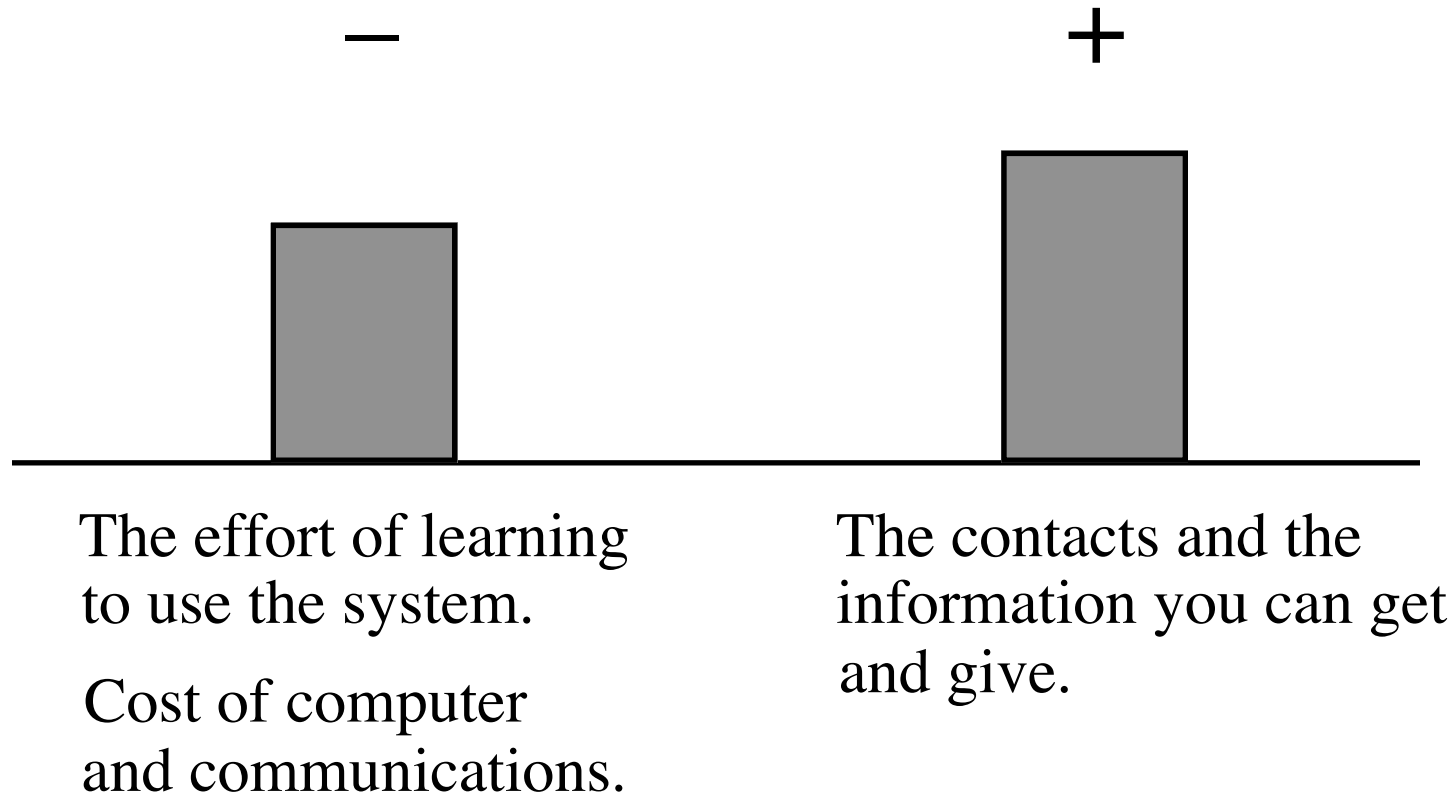# New ways of interworking

Hierarchical organsation

Network organisation

Critical mass theory, version 1

Critical mass theory, version 2

−   **+**

The effort of learning to use the system.

Cost of computer and communications.

The contacts and the information you can get and give.

The introduction of new communication technology into existing organisations is difficult and will not always succeed