

EDITORIAL PREFACE

AUTHOR :Barry Shore

With dispersed operations, collaborative alliances and access to integrative software, some of the challenges facing global IT management researchers include identifying the issues of concern to the managers who must develop and implement these applications, addressing the management problems that are technically and procedurally motivated, perhaps using ERP, SCM, and CRM software as the vehicle for these studies, and studying the role that social/cultural systems play in the way applications can be developed, implemented and used. Research into these and other areas associated with linking globally dispersed operations is necessary to better understand and manage the initiatives of the twenty-first century.

ARTICLES

GROUP SUPPORT SYSTEMS THROUGH THE LENS OF ACTION RESEARCH: EXPERIENCES IN ORGANISATIONS.

AUTHORS: Robert Davidson City University of Hong Kong; Sajda Qureshi Erasmus University, The Netherlands; Gert-Jan de Vreede, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands; Doug Vogel, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; Noel Jones, Capacity Building International, Ireland

ABSTRACT: In recent years, Group Support Systems (GSS) have been increasingly employed in organizational settings and a variety of task environments. In this paper we demonstrate how GSS can be embedded within an action research intervention, with research informing practice and vice-versa. This form of direct intervention in an organisational problem context stimulates participation in group interaction, with all stakeholders contributing, learning and benefiting. Five cases from different geosocial environments on three continents are used to illustrate the challenges and opportunities that arise. Benefits for organisational researchers and practitioners are identified and recommendations made for future work.

ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF KEY USAGE ASPECTS BETWEEN U.S. AND TAIWANESE FIRMS.

AUTHORS: Mary C. Jones, Mississippi State University, USA, Yi-Fang Ku, National Dong Hwa University, Haulien, Taiwan, and Ronald L. Berry University of Louisiana at Monroe, USA.

ABSTRACT: This study provides a comparison of cross-cultural differences in the use of EDI between 81 firms in the U.S. and 67 firms in Taiwan. Most of these firms were using traditional VAN mediated EDI, and had been influenced by some type of external pressure to use. The motivation for this study was to assess whether the Western model of EDI usage that most research is based on is applicable across cultures. Findings reveal that there are few differences between firms in the two countries with respect to type of benefits realized, compatibility of EDI with existing processes, and degree of integration of EDI in the firm or in the network of trading partners. However, ex post facto analysis provides further insight into the usage of EDI in both cultures.

INSTITUTIONALISING DECENTRALISED INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR LOCAL LEVEL PLANNING: COMPARING APPROACHES ACROSS TWO STATES IN INDIA.

AUTHORS: Shirin Madon, London School of Economics & Political Science, London, U.K, Subhash Bhatnagar, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, INDIA.

ABSTRACT: Since the 1980s, administrative reform in a number of developing countries has been directed at achieving decentralisation of planning through the use of information systems. These experiments have not led to any significant improvement in planning and monitoring of development programmes. In this paper, we argue that a closer look at different approaches to decentralisation is useful in order to draw wider lessons about long-term impact. We trace the process of decentralisation adopted in two states of India, namely Gujarat and Karnataka. While both states are noted for their decentralisation efforts, the degree to which new work practices have become institutionalised has been influenced by differences in the structure of their planning apparatus and different approaches to the implementation of information technology for local-level planning.

THE EXPERT OPINION

An Interview with Al-Wohaibi, Mohammed. A member of the Omani government IT Task Force, head of the Information Security Working Group, and a member of the

IEEE, and Hamed Al-Rawahy, A member of Omani government IT Task Force and head of the information sharing working group Mahesh S. Raisinghani, University of Dallas, Texas, USA. The interview was conducted by Mahesh S. Raisinghani, University of Dallas, Texas, USA. The interview discussed IT policy and IT initiatives in the Sultanate of Oman.

THE BOOK REVIEW

Written by **Edward M. Roche**, New York City.

He reviews "**The Process Edge: Creating Customer Value and Business Wealth.**" Peter Keen and Mark McDonald Publisher of the book: Harvard Business School Press (Forthcoming, Fall 2000)

The central thesis of eProcess Edge is that many companies have plunged into the eCommerce space, but with inadequate thought given to the back-end business processes needed for support. Keen and McDonald show how this is a major mistake, and suggest ways for a company to make the right decisions. "The gap between innovation and execution is a tough one to close." The book provides a tour de force of critical concepts needed to ensure that not only does the interaction with the customer work well, but the back-office processes supporting the business also work harmoniously.

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