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Different Approaches to Evaluation of Information Systems

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DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO EVALUATION OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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RATIONALE (OVERVIEW)

The main focus of the field of informatics traditionally has been on development and implementation of the information technology and information systems. In many development and implementation models the need for an evaluation phase is mentioned, but in practice there is generally not much efforts devoted to evaluation activities, compared with other activities. The time and economy limits may e.g. have been exceeded when the project is implemented. There is, however, an increasing community of researchers trying to draw attention to the importance of evaluation issues. The evaluation of the contents and process of the development, implementation and use of information systems could contribute to important knowledge that can be used in order to increase quality and efficient aspects of the organisation. The increasing focus on knowledge issues in organisations also should include an emphasis on the contribution of reflection and evaluation in the learning process. Different types of information systems need different evaluation approaches. The evaluation context is much more complex when a system is used by many users compared with a few users e.g. if a system is used by many users at different geographical locations and at different times (CSCW (Computer Supported Co-operative Work) systems) then the evaluation is even more complex. The characteristics of the information communicated through the system is also of importance. It is more complicated to evaluate the exchange of informal than formal information. Different types of organisations could have a need for different evaluation criteria. Is the organisation producing goods or services (or both)? Is it a private or public? Different parts of the organisations could have different internal logics and cultures that could affect the evaluation approaches. There is also a tendency for increasing communication using information systems between organisations and departments. The increasing complexity of the systems has lead to a focus on multi-method approaches among many researchers. In this panel debate some researchers are discussing the advantages and disadvantages with different approaches. The main focus on the debate is on future need for different evaluation approaches.

GOALS

The goals of the panel debate are to focus on the importance of evaluation issues in the field of informatics and to discuss the contribution of different evaluation approaches. The need for further development of evaluation models and methods should be investigated.
STRUCTURE

The panel discussion is initiated by a short presentation (5 minutes each) of the panellist and their research. Then the following issues are discussed. (One of the panellists has the response of initiating the debate for each issue).

What can we learn from evaluating information systems and what can the new knowledge contribute with? (Gerrit Tamm initiates the discussion of the issue)

How can we stimulate an increasing focus on evaluation issues?

Do we need different models and methods for different types of organisations and/or different types of information systems?

What are the needs for further development of evaluation approaches, models and methods?

The panel discussion will last for about 60 minutes.

PRESENTATION OF THE PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Ph. D. Owen Eriksson, Dalarna University and member of the research network VITS. During the period 1992-2000 has my main research field been evaluation of information systems. I have had a focus on the use of information systems and the effects that these systems have on business processes with a special focus on quality aspects. In my research I have developed and discussed the concept of communication quality and how to evaluate the communication quality of information systems embedded in a social interaction context. The concept of communication quality has been empirically grounded in case-studies, and theoretically grounded in the philosophy of language. I would also like to emphasise that in the research network VITS where I am a member, we have made a lot of evaluation research with a number of different applications from a number of different business areas. In VITS we also have a special interest group with a focus on effects and evaluation of information systems.


Ph. D Kerstin Grundén is an assistant professor at the University of Trollhättan/Uddevalla in Sweden. She has developed a model for evaluation of information systems, especially CSCW systems. The MOA-E model has been used in evaluating the use of videoconferences for health care planning. The model is also used in a study of work integrated e-learning at a big public organisation. Grundén has also developed a scenario model (MOA-S) for implementation work of CSCW systems.

Some publications:


**Ph. D Ela Klecun-Dabrowska**

Some publications:

**Ulrika Lundh Snis** is an Assistant Professor in Informatics at the University of Trollhättan/Uddevalla in Sweden. She has conducted several case studies in which collaborative aspect of knowledge codification has been the main focus. She has developed ICT conditions and requirements for knowledge communities especially within technical work domains. She is a founding member of Laboratorium for Interaction Technology and a member of the IRIS Association.

Some publications:

**Jan Pries-Heje** holds M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. He is now at The IT University of Copenhagen. His research interests include information systems development, evaluation, and software process improvement.

Some Publications:
MATHIASSEN, Lars, Jan PRIES-HEJE & Ojelanki NWENYAMA (eds.) (2002). Improving Software Organizations - From Principles to Practice. Addison-Wesley.
Different Approaches to Evaluation of Information Systems

**Gerrit Tamm** is the manager of the Electronic Business Forum and a doctoral student at Berlin-Brandenburger Graduiertenkolleg Verteilte Informationssystem.

Some publications:


Some publications:

**Dr Edward Truch** is Director at KM Forum Henley Management College, in Oxfordshire, UK. His research is especially focussing Knowledge Management aspects.

Publications:

**Ph. D Fahri Yetim** received his B.Sc. in Computer Science (1986), M.Sc. in Information Science (1989), and Ph.D. in Information Science (1994) in Konstanz, Germany. He was a research associate at the University of Konstanz (1989-1990), and visiting scientist at the Dept. of Linguistics, University of Hamburg (1995-1996), he worked in industry in Hamburg (1996-97), and held a DAAD professorship at the German Dept. of Information Systems, Marmara University Istanbul (1997-2000). He was a visiting researcher at the University of California (Summer 1997&1998), University of Osaka, Japan (Summer 1999), University of Boston (Summer 2000), and held a DAAD research fellowship at the University of Konstanz (Oct. 2000 - August2001).Since Sept. 2001, He has been a visiting scholar at the Information Systems Dept., New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), Newark/USA. He published several journal/conference papers relating to cultural and intercultural aspects of information systems from inter disciplinary perspectives.

Some Publications: