

HUMANE

Heads of University Management & Administration Network in Europe

SEMINAR

University of Salamanca

Friday 16th to Saturday 17th May 2003

ICT and Information Management

Abstracts

Managing large scale IT projects using his report on the CAPSA finance system introduced at the University of Cambridge

Michael Shattock, Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education University of London and former Registrar of the University of Warwick (UK).

Cambridge is one of the richest and most successful universities in Europe. In 1998 it allocated resources to bring its financial systems into the modern world and commissioned Oracle Financials to install an ERP system. The installation was a disaster and led to an academic revolt so that the Audit Committee set up an Inquiry as to what had gone wrong and why. What emerged was that although there were grave technical shortcomings the primary failures were personal, managerial and to do with the governance of the University. This presentation will not deal with the technical aspects of the failure but will draw on my Report on the Management and Governance Implications of the CAPSA failure: It will deal with decision-making, planning failures, management breakdowns and chronic lack of accountability. Out of all this it will try to draw some general lessons for the installation of large IT systems in universities.

IT system for the administration of personnel, students, and room bookings developed for all Austrian universities of the Arts

Elisabeth Freismuth, Universitats-direktorin, Universitat fur Musik und darstellende Kunst Vienna (AT)

Abstract to follow

Student record system developed for French Universities by AMUE (agence de Mutualisation)

Jean-pascal Bonhotol Secretaire-general, Universite Claude Bernard, Lyon I (FR)

Abstract to follow

Information and Communication Systems and Technology Plan. Case study of the development of the plan: methodology and results obtained at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Francisco Quintana, Gerente and Jaques Bulchand Guidumal, Director de Politica Informatica, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, (ES)

Lately, we are seeing how higher education institutions are going through a series of very important changes. On one hand, they have greater economical restrictions. On the other, they have a more imperative necessity to implement information systems

(IS) and information and communication technologies (ICT) in all the environments of university life.

Under this perspective, developing of information systems and information and communication technologies requires a careful planning. In fact, planning should involve the whole of the University Community, giving them the chance to participate and opine about what they think are the priorities which must be attended to in the short term and which should be the financial resource distribution.

To address the situation presented, in this presentation we propose a methodology to develop information system and information and communication technology plans in higher education institutions. We base our work in the existing methodology for the developing of strategic plans applying it to the information system and technology area. Thus, we propose a methodology composed of nine phases which involve the whole of the university community.

This nine phases are derived from strategic planning procedures, and are preplanning, internal diagnosis, external diagnosis, strategic interest theme definition, definition of mission and vision statements, definition of strategic axes, definition of objectives, definition of actions and implementation and control.

We also present the process carried out at our institution, the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, which has about 22,000 students, with 800 staff and 1,600 teachers and researchers.

We finish presenting the results of the above described process, the Information and Communication Systems and Technology Plan, which was approved February 2003 by government council of the university.

ESMU benchmarking exercise on Management Information Systems; and a case of a decentralised management information system with light central coordination in the University of Uppsala

Mats Ola Ottosson, University Director, University of Uppsala (SE)

The purpose and value of benchmarking in a university context will be discussed. Should it be done nationally or rather internationally? Which areas of activities are suitable for benchmarking? Should they be university-wide or rather limited to the central administration? Which are the internal prerequisites for a successful participation in a benchmarking exercise?

The ESMU benchmarking programme offers a structured and tested model. It can be discussed whether it is too structured and gives too little room for flexibility? Some universities participate regularly in the ESMU benchmarking activities, others come and go. Is participation worth the money it costs and it is worth the effort? Why did Uppsala join the programme in 2002 and why did we, at least temporarily, leave it in 2003?

For benchmarking on management information systems (MIS) you need a definition of MIS? Are MIS only information systems being used by the high-level management of the university, or are MIS also all the regular computerized administrative systems of the university? The latter systems are generally speaking working reasonably well at the participating universities but the needs of high-level management is often only recently being addressed through the development of drill-down or data warehousing systems.

Among the seven universities that participated in the benchmarking on MIS there were clearly different strategies. One difference was the degree of decentralisation, where the Swedish universities had a very small central IT/MIS function and expected the separate offices within the administration to plan, manage and operate their own computerized systems, but they should all do so in a user-oriented way.

Uppsala University shows an example of a decentralized arrangement, which will be briefly described. Principles for how to operate information systems are established centrally, and development work as well as operational support can, but must not necessarily, be bought from a central information technology support unit. However, responsibility for planning, performance specifications, financing and evaluation lies with the individual administrative departments. Thus a planning department is responsible for a general management information system that can be accessed by management at all levels and a few aspects of this system will be demonstrated.

Innovation, culture and leadership issues in the use of IT- case study examining the human resource, business and IT aspects of re-engineering the processes of a University admissions office

Chris Cobb, Director of Business systems and services, London School of Economics and Political Science (UK)

In 2000/2001 the LSE's postgraduate admissions office was in crisis. Year on year increases in masters' applications, ageing systems, inadequate staff resources and poor internal and external communication meant that applicants were having to wait unreasonable lengths of time for decisions, phone enquirers were being held in queues of up to an hour and internal customers were being delayed due to waiting on information. Other than two managers, no-one had worked there for more than 9 months, whilst over the preceding year 36 temporary staff had passed through the office.

This situation had come about over a long period, but loss of key experienced staff meant that processes became grid-locked in 2001 as applicants swamped the office with enquiries on their delayed decisions. This further exacerbated the delay in processing these decisions.

A widely held belief at the time was that technology would be able to resolve many of the problems without necessarily increasing staff resources. A business process review was instigated; its findings were varied and innovative, but crucially technology was not seen as the "cure-all". Rather, it was one of a number of complementary solutions.

This presentation will explore the measures taken and will demonstrate the importance of culture and leadership as well as innovation.

ICT centralised infrastructure – the advantages and disadvantages of using an integrated enterprise resource planning system to support all essential processes, with particular reference to SAP

Solke Veling, Chief Information Officer, Universiteit van Amsterdam (NL)

There comes a day when larger institutions have to decide whether or not to implement an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Examples of such systems are SAP, Peoplesoft, Renaissance, and so on. We will briefly sketch the two models:

ERP versus lean and mean. We'll see how a system like SAP develops over time towards a more open architecture. This allows for all kinds of combined strategy.

In all cases, the institute must first formulate its information architecture. In the absence of such an architecture, there is a high risk that it will not be possible to integrate at a reasonable cost the different systems for the different domains (finance, HRM, students, education, learning environment, research, etc.).

Discussions with respect to the choice between the two solutions centre on three very different groups of arguments. First, the characteristics of the institution may indicate whether the introduction of an ERP would be successful. Cases in point are the size of the institution and its complexity, organisational model (SAP is intended for businesses) and culture. The second group of criteria have a more technical nature. They concern efficiency and effectivity, as well as the expertise available in the organisation. The third group of arguments concern collaboration with other institutions and the willingness to adapt the organisation to the system, as opposed to the other way round.

After this we'll discuss the cost structure associated with an ERP system. We will also briefly present the results of recent research into the customer satisfaction of SAP users.

To sum it up: SAP may be good – but it's certainly expensive.

As an example, we'll sketch what happened at the Universiteit van Amsterdam when we implemented SAP/CRM.