Chapter VIII

Issues in End-User Behavior

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Abstract

What happens when end users do not respect the IS organization and have high computer self-efficacy? Will the end users develop usable systems and will they ignore IS? This chapter reports on a study of end-user computing within the engineering organizations of an electric utility undergoing deregulation. The study was initiated when management perceived that too much engineering time was spent doing IS functions. The study found that there was significant effort being expended on system development, support, and ad hoc use. Several issues were identified affecting system development, use of programming standards, documentation, infrastructure integration, and system support.
Introduction

Due to market deregulation causing uncertainty with respect to budget, the subject utility assessed its staffing. One organization assessed was engineering, where it was determined that staffing needed to be reduced by approximately 25%. A change management team was formed for identifying where and how work effort could be reduced. During this process it was noticed that the engineering organizations were spending significant amounts of time and effort on information technology (IT) related tasks. To assess this IT usage a team was formed consisting of engineering and information systems (IS) representatives and led by the author, a former member of the engineering organization and at the time of the study, a member of IS. The team collected an inventory of IT products and resources used by engineering organizations but not supplied, supported, or controlled by IS. The team also assessed how IT usage could be better managed by engineering.

The team found a significant amount of effort expended by engineering on IT, including system development and significant system support and ad hoc reporting efforts. Analysis of these efforts found several problems that caused additional wasted efforts and significant expenditure of additional funds. This analysis provides insight into how an organization can better manage end-user computing (EUC). This chapter focuses on the end-user system development issues identified during the study. To accomplish this the chapter will provide a background on the organization, end-user computing, and end-user system development. This is followed by a discussion on the methodology used for the study, a summary of the study’s findings with respect to amount of investment and effort in IS by the end users, an analysis of the findings, and conclusions.

Background

The End-User Organization

The subject engineering organization consisted of approximately 460 engineers disbursed among several different engineering groups spread across four management structures that were being reorganized into a single management structure with 330 engineers. Many of the engineering groups consisted of
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