Chapter XV

Academic and Business Users: A Model of ERP User Acceptance

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Abstract

This chapter proposes a model of ERP user acceptance, performing a qualitative assessment of a university implementation in terms of two distinctive user groups: business users and academic users. The model examines areas of system and information quality, attitudes and perceptions, training quality, user ability, and user’s situational and personal factors. Through conduction of a field study and subsequent analysis, it is concluded that the user groups, while experiencing a similar implementation process, are demonstrated as being so different and undergoing different forces that it cannot be stated which user group has the overall best level of acceptance of and satisfaction with the new ERP system. Factors such as personal and cultural background and workplace influences have proven to be extremely strong for both groups. Training is shown as having the greatest impact on the business user group, as the techniques used created favorable impressions of the new system, and it is possible such an effect could be extended to academic users, given different training circumstances.
Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the acceptance of an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, by two distinct user groups, within a university environment. A model of ERP user acceptance is presented, assessing dimensions of quality, attitudes and perceptions, user ability, situational and personal factors, and training quality. This leads to an assessment of use and acceptance of ERP systems, which is, in turn, coupled with user satisfaction. By assessing both business users and academic users, a determination can be made of the factors that have the greatest impact on system uptake and acceptance. This comparison will allow ERP implementations to focus on the influences that will have greatest positive impact.

Background and Definitions

Much literature exists on IS user satisfaction, however, there is little definition of what kind of user is actually being studied. With the rigidity of ERP interfaces, it can be valuable to identify separate user groups using the systems, and the contrast between them. A variety of definitions of “user” have existed, ranging from computer specialists to managers to the end users. This study adopts the view that a user is a person, in front of a computer screen, who uses the system through a predefined user interface (adapted from Lindroos, 1997).

The focus of study is on the two different user groups: the business and academic users, also known as staff and faculty. These can be defined as follows:

- Business users/administrative staff are those responsible for running the university: administration, human resources, financial, and general staff. These are the people who allow the university to operate from a functional perspective. The business users have much in common with what is considered a “typical system user” during IS implementation, and therefore, common user satisfaction issues may be considered (Bailey & Pearson, 1983).

Business users typically have much experience with information systems and computers in general, as the technology has been a key component of the marketplace for the past 20 years (Drucker, 1994).

- Academics/Faculty are those who have a focus upon research and teaching, who typically view the university as a means of maintaining their
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