Transaction Processing An Industry Performance Analyser for Tourism (IPAT):
Introducing an Information System into a Diverse Industry in Australia’s Capital Territory

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The case describes the development and implementation of a Web based application to manage the collection and analysis of business performance data in the tourism industry. The case initially focuses on challenges with the Industry Performance Analyser for Tourism (IPAT) and how this knowledge about past and potential systems failure was used when designing a new system. Attention to this part of the case will help build skills in describing logical specifications for information systems. The case is then concerned with project management challenges faced by the organisation when key people leave the project and a new management team is formed. The reader may be able to articulate strategies which enable information technology projects to become less dependent on the tacit knowledge of individuals or groups.

Keywords: information systems; knowledge management; retention of tacit knowledge; stakeholder engagement; tourism; tourism statistics; Web-based applications

ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND

This case is set in the tourism industry, in a destination marketing organisation (DMO) for one of Australia’s eight states and territories. The Australian tourism industry includes DMOs at national (Tourism Australia), state/territory (State Tourism Organisations), regional (Regional Tourism Associations), and local (Local Tourism Associations) levels. They operate under different funding models, but Tourism Australia and the State Tourism Organisations are directly
responsible to the Commonwealth and state governments respectively. Of the eight State Tourism Organisations, the Australian Capital Tourism Corporation (ACTC) is unique in that its jurisdiction (the Australian Capital Territory) includes no regional or local tourism associations. Like other DMOs, however, the ACTC has responsibility for promotional campaigns, event management, informing government tourism policy, and introducing strategies to assist the development of the tourism industry as a contributor to the broader economy.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has a population of just 330,000 centred on Australia’s capital city of Canberra. It draws much of its economic activity from housing the bulk of Australia’s federal public servants and public service agencies (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004). Outside of the public service sector, tourism is arguably the most significant industry for the Territory. In 2004, there were over 2 million visitors to the territory (Australian Capital Tourism Corporation, 2005b).

Figure 1 shows the state/territory and regional boundaries of Australia. The Australian Capital Territory is in the southeastern corner of mainland Australia (shaded black in Figure 1) and covers a land mass substantially smaller than many of the tourism regions in other states and the Northern Territory.

The ACT is largely a visiting friends and relatives tourism destination. The principal leisure tourism attractions of the ACT are the national monuments, galleries, and administration buildings including the Australian War Memorial, Parliament House, and the National Gallery of Australia. In addition, the ACT hosts several large scale festivals and events including Floriade, a flower

Figure 1. State and regional tourism boundaries (Tourism Research Australia, 2005)
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