INDUSTRY & PRACTICE

Internetalization of End-Users

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Technology revolution, specifically the Internet, is creating unprecedented demands on end users (especially managers) to access information, to make decisions, and to take instant action. Information is changing by the minute and is at the users' fingertips. Most information, be it local or global, is available on the Internet or company's intranet. Skills needed for jobs are changing. Most jobs in the current century require skills that are very different from traditional decision-making skills. Managers will have to be technically savvy, diversity conscious, and globally competent.

Organizations are faced with problems of shifting workforce, instant information availability, and an ever changing competitive environment. Only five years ago Sybase was a state-of-the-art database system, but today People Soft and ORACLE 8i/9 are the dominating database systems. In the future, we may see object-oriented databases and many newer versions of the current databases dominating the market. Operating systems are changing, Windows 95 is being replaced by Windows XP. Even LINUX is making inroads and may become viable competition in the operating system world. The Internet is changing the very “nature” of the business and making old technology obsolete. E-buying, e-training, e-advice, and all aspects of business are becoming Web-oriented. Businesses are following customers in the e-environment and are putting non-critical data on the Web for customers and employees.

This move towards “e-business” is changing business processes and consolidating jobs. Employees need to be re-educated more frequently than before. Only a few years ago it was sufficient to provide training in word processing and spreadsheets but not anymore. In fact, many end users have the proficiency in basic software packages; what they need is training in “new” Internet skills that will allow them to access, use and modify data for their usage. In the 90s, in some cases data were just a click away but in the next century, most data will be just a click away. Companies need to provide “technology and job-oriented training/education continuously, and end users need to know current technology to maintain their job and marketability.

The obvious question, of course, is how to make employees “technology” savvy. Technology will help them communicate better (email), get more information
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