Chapter XI

ITFG: Design and Experience with a Groupware System

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Abstract

In this chapter we present results of a project in the field of groupware systems. Munich University of Applied Sciences has set up an initiative called IT-Forum to coordinate IT activities across its 14 different departments. As part of this initiative a groupware system was developed on the basis of the Web application server ZOPE and the database mySQL. The objective of this project was to use the groupware systems operatively as communication platform within the IT-Forum and in project-orientated
student courses. Furthermore the development and use of the application has been accompanied by some research work in the field of groupware systems. The main focus of this chapter is to describe this groupware system and report some experience of the use of it.

Introduction

IT Forum at Munich University of Applied Sciences

Information technology is a key supporting function for companies. Since it supports almost any functional part of a company it is important to address IT as multi-disciplinary, for example, business information systems, bio-informatics, customer relationship management, geo-informatics.

To address the multi-disciplinarily of information systems already in education, MUAS (Munich University of Applied Sciences) set up an initiative called IT-Forum to coordinate and support information technology related activities across the whole university.

A generous public financial funding (Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsprogramm) over a period of three years (from 2000 to end of 2003) demonstrates the importance of the topic.

Munich University of Applied Sciences has about 13,000 students. It is the largest University of Applied Sciences in Bavaria and the second largest in Germany. MUAS consists of 14 departments, namely the Department of Architecture, the Department of Civil Engineering & Steel Construction, the Department of Mechanical, Automotive & Aeronautical Engineering, the Department of Electrical Engineering & Information Technology, the Department of Building Services, Process Engineering, Paper and Synthetics, Printing and Electronic Media, the Department of Precision- and Micro-Engineering, Engineering Physics, the Department of Computer Science, Mathematics, the Department of Geoinformatics, the Department of Industrial Engineering, the Department of Business Administration, the Department of Social Sciences, the Department of Design, the Department of General Studies and the Department of Tourism.

Every department uses information technology or even offers basic IT courses to its students. So the members of the 14 departments were invited to form
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