SOFTWARE UPGRADE EFFECTS ON PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND USER SATISFACTION: A PILOT STUDY

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In recent years, microcomputer software upgrades have become increasingly common. Hence, it has become necessary to ask whether all software upgrades are needed and whether customer organizations should continue to invest in them without question. A pilot survey was distributed to individuals in a selected sample of business organizations. The subjects were asked about the most recent software upgrades they experienced in their work environment, the frequency of the upgrades, the process by which upgrades were acquired, whether internal technical support and training were available, and the effects of software upgrades on their individual performances. Overall, it appeared that whether or not a user has a 'say' in the software upgrading process significantly affects how the upgrade is perceived, and a formal need-benefits analysis process for upgrading software seems to play a significant role in user satisfaction. Moreover, differences exist in perceptions for upgrades of different types of software applications.

TOWARD A PRACTICAL METHODOLOGY FOR EVALUATING USERS' SATISFACTION WITH IS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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Both academic and practitioner literature have continuously recognized the importance of users' satisfaction in the success of information system (IS) applications. Several techniques for measurement have subsequently emerged, yet business organizations have found these processes too cumbersome to be justified financially and practically. This research focuses on the establishment of a methodology for a solution to this problem, using unobtrusive "sub" or "meta" information systems. At a field site, one such meta-monitoring system worked in the background of a primary system to collect usage data both before and after enhancements to the system were installed. Time and space dimensions of this data were used to determine satisfaction. A written survey was applied in parallel, to aid in the initial selection of the meta-monitoring dimensions, and then to validate the results taken from the system. The final results demonstrate that the meta-monitoring system is a viable alternative to the survey in user satisfaction measurement.

A COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATION OF INFLUENCE SOURCES OF DIFFUSION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) OUTSOURCING IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

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Loh and Venkatraman define IT outsourcing as "the significant contribution by external vendors in the physical and/or human resources associated with the entire or specific components of the IT infrastructure in the user organization." They argue that IT outsourcing can be treated as an innovation and present a longitudinal study examining its diffusion in the United States. The present study represents an extension of their work. The objective of this paper is to provide a comparative investigation of the influence sources of IT outsourcing in Europe and the United States. More specifically, the following research questions are addressed in the paper: What are the dominant influence sources of IT outsourcing in European countries? Are there any systematic differences in the dominant influence sources, when compared with the Loh and Venkatraman (1992) study? What are the reasons for the similarities or differences in the influence sources for Europe and the U.S.? and Is there any evidence of the Kodak effect in Europe?

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS AND DESIGN TOOLS AS A COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL

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One role of information systems (IS) models is to be a communications medium so that persons involved in an IS project can understand the information system. Understanding of an IS is broken down into a number of dimensions, related to processing activities and data components, and examined in an experiment. Written narratives describing an IS (the full system treatment) and a subsystem of this IS (the subsystem treatment) were constructed. For the DFD groups, data flow diagrams and entity relationship diagrams were constructed based on the narratives; object diagrams and service charts were constructed for the OD groups. As a result, the tool type and scope of the information system were manipulated. Prior to the experiment session, a training session was conducted to familiarize the subjects with models constructed using the systems analysis tools in question. During the experiment session, each subject was assigned to a treatment group based on the models (or narrative) provided. Each subject studied the models and then answered a number of objective, recognition questions designed to test understanding along the dimensions identified above. ANOVA was used to determine differences between treatment groups; results will be presented in the final paper.