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Information Systems and Corporate Memory: design for staff turn-over

Colin Sharp, Neil Lewis

Abstract

The "information age" is reliant upon the information skill-base of people and the storage and access of complete data. Staff turn-over and "down-sizing" as well as the rate of organisational change places increased pressure on the designers of corporate information systems to keep up with the organizational demands. Especially relevant are the "soft" aspects of the corporate information needs of organizations. The term "corporate memory" is introduced to explain the relatively informal collective and individual knowledge of employees gained through their experience and position in the organization. This paper elaborates the issues concerned with the "corporate soft data", and makes suggestions for research, as well as for planners of corporate information systems in organizations facing major down-sizing or related changes. It is concluded that there are a number of readily obtainable sources of soft data in the organization and these data should be analysed for inclusion in system development. If organizations are to become learning systems and not just keep repeating the same mistakes, they need to review all aspects of corporate memory, especially the soft data sources and losses.

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