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Going Soft on Information Systems Evaluation

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Abstract

The way organisations do business has changed dramatically over the last twenty years and so have their information systems as they attempt to support and promote the business enterprise. The information system has a key role to play in the success or possible failure of the business yet, despite its importance, there is little evidence that the components of the information systems evaluation process have kept pace with its changing role as they tend to rely on techniques based on narrow tangible/objective methods rather than on more holistic approaches which, in addition to the more traditional methods, include social, political and cultural perspectives more in keeping with the complex interactions associated with modern organisations. The paper charts the recent progress of organisational change, the increasing role of information systems within the organisation, and the information systems evaluation processes. It concludes with a proposal as to how the evaluation process could be widened to include the views and interests of a larger range of stakeholders by drawing upon elements of the soft systems methodology.

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