Collaborative Vision Development

Introduction to the minitrack

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The minitrack on Collaborative Vision Development deals with the development and use of participative methods and tools to support groups in participatively developing shared understanding and vision regarding their organizational systems. This includes collaborative approaches to create a vision for organizational systems, to model organizations as systems, and to translate the system visualized into a system implemented. As a follow-up of last year’s minitrack on Collaborative Engineering of Processes and Systems, this minitrack does not focus on reengineering organizational systems for improvement, but on designing organizational systems for the future. This year, we selected a number of interesting papers for the minitrack, which give a good insight into the current state of the field and the opportunities that are still ahead of us.

Den Hengst and de Vreede open this year’s minitrack with presenting a research framework for vision support studios. The authors make clear that today’s methodologies for business engineering could change because of the increasing capabilities of new information technologies. Additionally, they state that this is appropriate because of the changes that have and are taking place in organizational systems and their environments. Experiences from many different case studies carried out over a number of years are presented. The authors organize the experiences and combine them into a research framework for vision support studios, the new methodology they are proposing. The research framework addresses the steps, business modeling and collaboration as the three cornerstones in the studio.

The next paper also stresses the importance of integrating modeling techniques with collaboration. In their paper, Bockstael, Mayer, and Valentin illustrate a visualization-simulation to be used in a collaborative environment. It is argued that a visualization-simulation should be easy and fast to use, but still powerful enough to deal with complexity. The authors built a visualization-simulation tool that shows these characteristics. They have designed a game in which the tool could be used in a participative way. The results of playing the game with over seventy students indicate that the visualization-simulation tools are easy to work with, greatly contribute to the quality and process of negotiation and generate mutual understanding under the participants.

Hayes closes this year’s minitrack with a discussion on the facilitation of a vision development process for United Way. The paper shows clearly what activities the author used to achieve buy in on a vision, in what order the activities have been carried out, how the process was facilitated, and who was invited for the activities. Although different from most commonly used group processes, Hayes seems to be very effective in Collaborative Vision Development. Some of the secrets to this are the use of a model as a vehicle for communication, and the different voting methods used.

The papers in this minitrack provide new insight into the field of collaborative vision development. Both the theoretical background and case evidence that the methods work in real life cases are presented. We commend the papers to your attention and trust that they will stimulate discussions and future research.