ERP/ERP II Issues and Answers: Session Overview

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This is the fourth year at HICSS where there is a session devoted to ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) systems research. Last year, participants at the session discussed the idea of expanding ERP to include the add-on products sometimes called ERP II or EAI (Enterprise Application Integration or expanded ERP systems). Based on this suggestion, the mini-track was modified to include ERP II systems as well. There were 10 full papers submitted and 1 other paper that was partially complete. The papers selected for this year’s conference cover a full range of topics from conceptual modeling to specific case studies.

Even though software sales are depressed, ERP systems remain in the forefront of software development activities. More important, however, ERP is just the beginning of a future trend towards EAI. Some think that EAI, a term even more vague than ERP, is the future of computing systems and a necessary foundation for full integration of enterprise-wide applications [Manchester, 1999, Stein, 1999, and Teresko, 1999]. The literature is just beginning to define what EAI means, but all agree that it is a pre-requisite to successful deployment of e-commerce and e-business applications. Most simply, EAI is the opening of internal systems to customers and suppliers so that e-business can be enabled through the Internet. How EAI can take place is still a large question.

The first paper addresses this broader area of EAI. “Towards a Novel Framework for the Assessment of Enterprise Application Integration Packages” provides a conceptual framework that can be used both to select an appropriate EAI solution for an enterprise and to conduct further research in EAI implementation.

Similarly, the second paper, “Benefits of an ERP Maintenance Model to Management”, introduces a model to use to plan maintenance and upgrades to existing mature ERP system environments. Case data are used to develop the model and benefits of the model are highlighted.

In “ERP Experience in Taiwan: An Empirical Study and Comparative Analysis” the authors present survey results of businesses using ERP systems in Taiwan. Data are compared with respect to ERP solution characteristics, user satisfaction and implementation factors.

Similarly, in “Critical Success Factors of ERP Systems Implementation Success in China” ERP implementations in China are surveyed. Data are presented with respect to user satisfaction, vendor support, technical and organizational factors. This paper is presented sixth in the mini-track.

The last 2 papers focus more on the training and learning aspects of ERP. A causal model based on factors that affect formal and informal training show that learning is used to predict the quality of use in ERP implementation in the fourth paper. “Learning to Use ERP Technology: a Causal Model” has an extensive list of references used to inductively develop the relationships among the variables.

Finally, learning ERP is also the subject of the fifth paper, “E-Skills: The Next Hurdle for ERP Implementations”. Information Systems professionals are surveyed to determine what skills are needed to meet the shortage of ERP/E-business professionals that exist world-wide.

In conclusion, for the first time there are papers for 2 sessions in this mini-track. There are 2 papers that related to more mature ERP implementations, 2 that focus on understanding more about the implementation patterns in Taiwan and China, and 2 papers that relate to learning ERP related skills, knowledge and abilities.