EVOLUTIONARY SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT ORGANISATIONAL AND BUSINESS PROCESS CHANGE: A CASE STUDY ACCOUNT

KEYWORDS

evolutionary systems, legacy systems, E-type systems, business process reengineering,

user-centred design, federal structures, process modelling,

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the issues of software support in situations of organisational and process change. There is wide agreement in the literature that organisations have to be increasingly flexible in order to survive in the current economic climate. They must innovate, replicate, adapt and extemporise. As they do so, the requirements they have of their software applications are likely to change. Equally, as new software solutions are provided, new opportunities for business change arise. The situation is made still more complex because even if the needs of organisations were stable, we still could not be certain of the validity of an applications' functions. This is because the process of program development is inherently uncertain. From this situation arise difficult, practical challenges for those concerned with the deployment of software in organisations. Starting with a consideration of the nature of organisations themselves, this paper takes looks at these problems by moving between three related vantage points. It looks at software development methodologies. It suggests that these have in the past tended to assume that discrete IT solutions can be cast for a "steady state" which the organisation is attempting to achieve. From the second vantage point it looks at the role of IT staff in supporting the operational needs of the organisation. The third is the nature of software systems themselves.