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Chapter I

Cross-Cultural Information Resource Management: Challenges and Strategies

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Abstract

As modern business activities become increasingly global, so too does information resource management (IRM). To manage information resources successfully in this global environment, one great challenge facing the management team is how to deal with national cultural differences. In this chapter, national cultural differences are discussed to indicate the substance of IRM challenges in a cross-cultural environment. Many recently published cases are studied to clarify management challenges of cross-cultural ISM. Primary management issues of mismatch between information presentation and information procurement are analyzed in particular detail. Further, management solutions oriented for IRM in a cross-cultural environment are explored. Due to the lack of similar research topics, this study could supply a gap for cross-cultural IRM. The contribution of this chapter will be twofold: one is to set up a sound management mechanism for cross-cultural IRM; the other is to create sharable information resources in a cross-cultural environment.

Introduction

Organizations are increasingly aware of the potential of information resource management (IRM) for gaining a competitive advantage and sustaining their business success, because if information resources are managed properly, significant benefits can be derived from improved productivity, improved quality of decision-making, and improved performance of tasks or organizational learning curve.

IRM is defined as a comprehensive approach to the collection, storage, process, maintenance, and dissemination of electronic information as well as the exchange of information between different organizations (Brisis, 1995). IRM is also known in some literature as information management, information systems management (Bertot, 1997), and management information systems or management of information technology (Maceviciute & Wilson, 2002), and covers five types of resource management: systems support; processing data and images; conversion and transformation; distribution and communication; and, finally, retention, storage, and retrieval (Schneyman, 1985).

The rapid development and progress of information technology and Internet technology have contributed substantially to the feasibility of global business, such as manufacture, transportation, service, publication, education, and so forth. IRM accompanying various global businesses is crossing national borders and, thus, has to deal with the differences of various countries. One of these differences is culture that has the possibility of profoundly influencing IRM. According to literature, many scholars have studied IRM in relation to national cultural differences. Most of them, however, have approached it from a technology acceptance perspective, which is based on a fundamental concept that IRM supports information management by providing the technical capability and overall guidance for information management to do its job (Schneyman, 1985). For example, Robey and Rodriguez-Diaz (1989) studied how national cultural differences could affect the success in information systems implementation; Nelson, Weiss, and Yamazaki (1992) discovered that end-user computing is profoundly different in the United States compared to Japan; Shore (1994) tested the influences of culture on information systems applications; Kwon and Chidambaran (1998) studied how culture influences communication technology acceptance; Straub, Loch, and Hill (2001) examined cultural influence on transfer of information technology to developing countries; Carayannis and Sagi (2001) investigated the relationship between national cultural differences and System Design Life Cycle; Rose, Evaristo, and Straub (2002) studied culture and consumer responses to Web download time. They found that participants from polychronic societies were less troubled by download delays and perceived the delays to be shorter than did people from monochronic cultures. Recently, more research interest has moved to cross-cultural IRM, such as cross-cultural software production and use (Walsham, 2002), cross-cultural information systems adoption in multinational corporations