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Chapter 7

Our Mousetrap's Fine: So Why Aren't People Beating A Path To Our Door?

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Over the last decade, researchers of user satisfaction have continued to examine the elusive failure of information systems (IS) amidst advances in computer technology. This chapter suggests that despite the very important findings in the area of user satisfaction, very little is finding its way to the day-to-day practices. The chapter continues to suggest that even more alarming is the notion that most users expect that systems will be difficult to use and there is little demand by them for the inclusion of psychological or organisational aspects to be included in information systems. This is supported by results of a pilot study examining criteria used for repurchase of computing technology. Finally, the chapter briefly examines the organisational culture which appears to prevent users demanding more attention to user satisfaction criteria and proposes some necessary inclusions for an infrastructure; users will begin to expect and demand the inclusion of psychological and organisational aspects in the development and implementation of information systems.

Today, organisational behaviour constitutes a major challenge to information systems (Lucas, 1975; Turner, 1982; Markus, 1984; Williams, 1991). Among organisational behaviour issues, user satisfaction is considered a crucial factor affecting IS effectiveness and success (Powers and Dickson, 1973; Ives and Olson, 1984; Raymond, 1987; Abdul-Gader, 1996). However, despite the large amount of research surrounding the area of user satisfaction, studies (Franklin et al., 1992; Hornby et al., 1992; Hovmark and Norel, 1993; Williams, 1994; Markus and Keil, 1994) suggest that most systems fail to meet the objectives and

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aspirations held for them, not because they are not technically sound, but because psychological and organisational issues were not well addressed during the development, implementation and use of the systems.

Perhaps even more alarming is the notion put forward by Clegg (1993) who claims that most users of information systems actually expect not to find organisational or psychological factors built into the systems with which they are presented. So, despite the many important studies which have attempted to model the nature of user satisfaction, and the substantial findings which have grown out of such research, there is little demand by users for these findings to be incorporated into information systems.

This chapter will consider the results of a pilot study carried out on small to medium enterprises. The study supports the notion that organisational and psychological factors are not considered important by such organisations when the acquisition of computer technology is being carried out. The chapter begins by first looking at some of the psychological and organisational issues lacking in IS. The chapter continues by examining the nature of user satisfaction models. The chapter then discusses the use of these models in IS development, backed up by a pilot study we carried out on small to medium-size enterprises. The chapter will then briefly examine the organisational culture which maintains this lack of demand for organisational and psychological parameters by users of information systems. Finally, a set of necessary inclusions for organisational structure will be suggested. While these inclusions are far from complete, it is suggested that they form a basis such that users begin to expect the inclusion of organisational and psychological parameters in newly developed information systems.

Organisational And Psychological Factors Lacking In Information Systems Development, Implementation And Use

A number of organisational and psychological factors have been identified in the literature as lacking in IS development, implementation and use. These include lack of:

• ***Establishment of Career/Future Opportunities Associated with IS and Job Stress Reduction***. Today's high global unemployment rate has made employees concerned about the introduction of new technologies in the workplace, and the impacts that these technologies may have on their job performance and job security. A number of research studies have identified how office automation may bring about adverse working conditions, i.e., job design, which in turn could affect job stress. Sainfort (1990) in a study concludes that career/future concerns most contribute to job stress in computers users. A study by Ray et al. (1994) also reveals that both business owners and employees believe computer technology creates job stress and contributes to discomfort for users.

• ***Processes Associated with The IS: Job Design, Job Range and Job Depth Which Guarantee Autonomy, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, Rewards and Benefits for Users.***

A number of studies (e.g., Eason, 1988; Clegg et al., 1989; Franklin et al., 1992; Markus and Keil, 1994; Williams, 1994) conclude how job design, job range and job depth (which guarantee job autonomy and job stress reduction), job satisfaction, and job performance are of much concern to computer systems users. Indeed, Hovmark and Norell (1993) point out how computer systems used for much of the working day can be expected to influence the