

Chapter 22

Crucial Consequences of Un-Holistic Business Information

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ABSTRACT

Modern business environments require innovated business concepts. Meeting them in enterprises' functioning depends also on creation and implementation of appropriate information support. In terms of contents, information support and information must be reliable to not be misinformation; information and communication technology is not enough for it because information means impact. Potential errors on the long path from data to information must hence be prevented. A one-sided approach, which belongs to the practices of professionals as narrow specialists, can prevent errors and misinformation rarely – when rather one-sided information is enough. More complex situation and processes require a more holistic approach that, in its turn, requires interdisciplinary creative co-operation of specialists of various interdependent professions. The authors try to contribute to discussion about reliability of information by thinking how can one tackle the data-to-information-to-decision process in order to diminish dangers of poor reliability of information/decision.

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, handicraft and agricultural producers used to prevail and to basically know who their expectable customers (= market) are (Collins, 2001; Florida, 2002; Daft, 2003; Potocan, 2003; etc.). Their technology did not change much either. Thus, their **information** requirement was limited

to finance. This old habit is still around – finance and accountancy still tend to be one department; controlling tends to be a little bit more holistic only. There is hardly any “Information Department” making all kind of **data** and **messages** into requisitely holistic **information** for business operation management (Afuah, 1998; Laudon et al., 2005; Potocan, 2005; Kelley, 2009).

It must serve a much innovated business management concept, which most authors briefs: from

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Table 1. The selected level of holism and realism of consideration of the selected topic between the fictitious, requisite, and total holism and realism of approach and wholeness of insights, actions, and other outcomes

←----->		
Fictitious holism/realism (inside a single viewpoint)	Requisite holism/realism (a dialectical system of all essential viewpoints)	Total = real holism/realism (a system of all viewpoints)
Dangerous due to causing one-sided oversights along with partial insights based on specialization	Attainable, but depending on human choice of the essential viewpoints/professions from all possible, and their synergies	Ideal, but impossible to attain due to huge complexity of reality reaching beyond human capability

“make-and-sell”, to “sense-and-respond”, toward “anticipate-and-learn” (Afuah, 1998; Cohen, 2002; Barabba, 2004; Bernson, Standing, 2008). The new situation requires a new approach – “state of mind” that balances creativity and intuition with analytics and science (Afuah, 1998; Gunton, 1998; Brown, Duguid, 2000; Verma, Kapur, 2006; Curtis, Cobham, 2008).

Information management innovation is needed, and (requisitely) holistic thinking must be its background. The problem of the theory and practice of business informatics has lied in the target orientation aimed at requisite **business information** (Gunton, 1998; Anderson, 2000; Harmon, 2003; Laudon et al., 2007; Potocan, 2008). And in attempts to increase **holism** of information, we are facing two basic problems of data suitability, e.g. what is adequately target-oriented **information**; and how to create (and define) a suitable level of generalization of information, resulting from **data** and **messages**, in order to avoid **errors**.

We hence try to research more deeply **errors** in **information** systems and add to discussion about reliability three pointed-out topics: reality and captured data are not the same, decision-making takes place within a context, and only selected data are processed. We also try to contribute to discussion by thinking how can one tackle the data-to-information-to-decision process in order to diminish the number and weight of errors. Data recording errors follow earlier errors – data selection, and data selection basis and errors in it.

WHOLENESS OF INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Concept of Requisite Holism and Wholeness

Holism of human behavior has never been attainable, neither is wholeness of its outcomes if the word is taken completely literally like it is put in dictionaries: in them it includes every attribute, all attributes, and nothing (!) is left aside. All (!) professions (which tend to be several thousand) would have to be included. And this cannot be done. That’s why Mulej and Kajzer introduced the law of requisite holism (Mulej, 1974; Mulej, Kajzer, 1998; Mulej et al, 2000; Mulej et al., 2003; Mulej et al., 2005; Mulej, 2007) to make the Mulej’s concept of the Dialectical System (DS) clear and acceptable. It expresses the experience that one has the unavoidable habit to select the DS as a synergetic network of all crucial viewpoints to be considered, and to leave the others aside, or to reduce even more. Reductionism is both unavoidable and dangerous. See Table 1.

Selection of the crucial viewpoints and neglecting of other viewpoints of consideration is due to the decision-makers and their attributes as their subjective starting points that include—in synergy—both knowledge and emotions. The latter are expressed as values and may become culture, ethics, and norms.

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