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A Single Case Pilot Study Exploring the Maturity of Business Intelligence Systems in the Not-For-Profit Sector

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Abstract
This paper describes a research-in-progress which is a qualitative single case pilot study of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Queensland section exploring the integration of business intelligence and sustainability in the not-for-profit sector in Australia. Preliminary findings suggest a low level of business intelligence maturity but a growing recognition of the value IT governance and a high awareness of sustainability principles.

Keywords: business intelligence, sustainability, balanced scorecard, IT governance, not-for-profit

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INTRODUCTION

The research-in-progress is a qualitative single case pilot study of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Queensland section exploring the level of business intelligence (BI) maturity in the not-for-profit sector in Australia. As a not-for-profit organization, the RFDS is supported by Commonwealth, State and Territory government grants, as well as community and corporation donations. The RFDS consists of seven legal entities, of which the Queensland Section is one. It is planned to extend the study nationally at a later time.

The research design of the pilot study is qualitative and interpretive. For the pilot study, six participants, all senior managers or board members, were interviewed in June and July this year through in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews of 30 to 60 minutes. At the time of writing, five of the six interviews have been transcribed to Word documents from audio recordings. Preliminary findings suggest a low level of ICT maturity in the organization but a growing recognition of the value of an ICT strategic plan, IT governance, and a high awareness of sustainability principles.

Community and stakeholder demands towards social and environmental care ensure that issues of sustainability are inescapable in today's business setting, with organizations rated overwhelmingly as underachieving in improving the social and environmental consequences of their actions (Bonini, Mendonca and Oppenheim, 2006). Initially, the researcher considered using the dimensions of the balanced scorecard for sustainability (SBSC) model as a broad analytical framework. The balanced scorecard (BSC) is a strategic performance management tool developed for the private sector and used by managers to monitor, measure and manage a company's strategic objectives (Rohm and Halbach, 2005). More recently in scholarly writings, the BSC model is linked with the sustainability dimension or applied to the public sector such as government agencies and not-for-profit organizations. Petrini and Pozzebon (2009) propose a conceptual model that seeks to support the process of integration of socio-environmental indicators into organizational strategy for sustainability. The RFDS has a strong commitment to excellence, particularly in aviation and medical care to Australians in remote and rural Australia. By the demonstration of enduring corporate responsibility and an intent to pursue the latest in technology, the RFDS is an ideal exploratory case study.

However the researcher has three major concerns. These are:

1. The shift of the study from its original focus on the maturity of BI systems to IT governance
2. The lack of a scholarly theoretical framework suitable for an interpretive study
3. The issues associated with applying the practitioner-oriented sustainability balanced scorecard as an analytical framework

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