Introduction to the Minitrack on Information Systems Success and Benefits Realization

Samuli Pekkola
Tampere University of Technology, Finland
samuli.pekkola@tut.fi

Tero Päivärinta
Luleå University of Technology, Sweden
tero.paivarinta@ltu.se

Information systems (IS) are acquired and implemented through varying means: as service (cloud computing), as configurations to large enterprise systems, as packaged software, or through dedicated development. It is common that all these aim at successful and beneficial utilization of a new system. However, despite existing tracks of research on these topics, according to Gartner reports and popular press articles, numerous information systems acquisition projects fail in terms of costs, schedules, and objectives [3]. Models and methods for understanding IS success and benefits, benefits realization of information systems in general, proactively measuring them before renewal, or retrospectively analyzing them at the project have largely remained untouched.

Despite the number of problematic IS projects, the topic is still little understood in the researcher community. For example, such questions as how to proactively set measurable objectives for IS benefits, how to choose an appropriate acquisition strategy and method for maximum benefits, how to execute the acquisition project and to manage the benefits successfully, and how to measure and realize benefits of IS investments after the project have been left largely intact – even though these are significant issues for practitioners and economy. For example the famous IS success model [1, 4] identifies a benefit realization model, while theorizing about the phenomena on an abstract level. Hence, although benefits realization has even been suggested as the most important issue to be considered by IS procurement professionals in the public sector [2], our understanding of success and benefits of IS investments remains rather abstract in practice. This is problematic as, e.g., in Norway, all public ICT acquisitions need to justify rather detailed benefits to the public or to the civil servants proactively, before the acquisition takes place. Although the literature documents several methods and techniques for benefits justification, measurement, management and realization, they have not reached wide utilization in practice. The situation is, up to a large extent, identical in the private sector as, for instance, business cases are difficult to write and different IS initiations and implementations are difficult to compare.

This minitrack presents three papers that contribute to different conceptual viewpoints related to IS success and benefits: interaction between information technology characteristics and strategic intent for IT adoption and development, multifaceted nature of IS benefits, and matching development approaches to the business contexts where development and benefits realization takes place to avoid failures.

- Khazanchi & Owens define and identify the success factors in a strategic intent of the organization's planning process for IT. They highlight how strategic intent, in turn, is itself partially defined by information technology at hand.
- Ylinen & Pekkola analyze the facets of IS acquisition success. They present differing views in defining the success, and point out a contradiction between the formal measures and the stakeholders' perceptions. The authors propose a comprehensive IS acquisition success model.
- Dahlberg & Lagstedt study two failed IS development projects. They argue that development methods should be better matched with the characteristics of business development contexts and disclose novel failure reasons for IS projects.

References

[1] DeLone, W.H., & McLean, E.R. (2003). The DeLone and McLean Model of Information Systems Success: A Ten-Year Update. *Journal of MIS*, *19*(4), 9-30.

[2] Moe, C. E., & Päivärinta, T. (2013). Challenges in information systems procurement in the public sector. *Electronic Journal of e-Government*, *11*(1).

[3] Pekkola, S., Niemi, E., Rossi, M., Ruskamo, M., & Salmimaa, T. (2013). ERP Research at ECIS and ICIS: a fashion wave calming down?. *ECIS* (p. 123).

[4] Petter, S., DeLone, W.H., & McLean, E.R. (2008). Measuring Information Systems Success: Models, Dimensions, Measures, and Interrelationships. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *17*, 236-263

HICSS