

Socio-technical IS context in Organizations – How to Figure it?

Information Systems (IS) are socio-technical systems; they should be considered as entities of people working together and using technology. In the field of IS research, the gap between the realization of IS in a social context in its everyday use and the theories and plans of IS implementation is acknowledged, but little research has been conducted to fill this gap (c.f. Avgerou). Although the concept of social context is widely studied among anthropology and social sciences, the context of modern socio-technical computer based IS does not necessarily fit into their study models, and more studies on this area are needed.

The existing IS context studies are not only focused on producing theories, frameworks, or methods to observe the working environment, but more on the technical and economical aspects of developing IS. The operating environment varies from organization to organization between countries, and also from one site to another within a country. Yet many frameworks that guide organizational strategies and development assume a homogenous environment and exclude the questions of culture and context (Okunoye 2003). Also successful transfer of new technologies into organizations requires an understanding of micro-level beliefs, norms, and actions within the framework of professional, organizational, national and international macrostructures (c.f. Straub et al. 2002)

In this paper is presented frameworks, which could be used as tools in the research of socio-technical, non-measurable area of IS, in different organizational environments and cultures. The models should be culture ignorant in a means that they don't promote any specific cultural view, and as well culture aware to realize the cultural features existing in the IS context. The frameworks could be used in IS development, implementation, and research, both in IS education and by IS professionals.