



ICS 132: Organizational Information Systems

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UCI Information & Computer Science

administrivia

- class times
 - lectures: M, W 11-12:30, SH 128
 - discussion: F 1-1:50, SH 128
- add/drop dates
 - drop deadline is January 18
 - add deadline is February 15
- this course is...
 - intermediate between ICS 131 and 135
 - the classes with a satisfaction guarantee!

personnel

- instructor
 - Paul Dourish <jpd@ics.uci.edu>
 - office ICS2 206
 - office hours: by appointment (email)
 - I'm generally available if my office door is open
- teaching assistants
 - Sameer Patil <patil@ics.uci.edu>
 - Dhawal Shah <shahd@uci.edu>

grading

- breakdown
 - 20% homework
 - 25% project
 - 25% midterm
 - 30% final
 - ... but you *must* do everything!

policies

- academic honesty
 - simple: zero tolerance
- spelling
 - “organization” and “organisation” are both fine ☺
 - I'm not going to be so careful about “z” in future
- some timing details
 - no meeting during week 3 (Jan 21)
 - midterm will be Feb 6
 - final will be *during last teaching week*

texts and resources

- Alter, Information Systems
 - management perspective on information systems
- Lofland and Lofland
 - field work and qualitative methods
- a lot of reading
 - not just volume, but also a different style
- class web page
 - <http://www.ics.uci.edu/~jpd/classes/ics132w02>
 - look there for schedule and for copies of slides

topic

- organizational information systems
 - how do organizations work?
 - how do information systems support organizations?
 - techniques for understanding organizations
 - designing and deploying organizational IS
- focus on requirements
 - what they are
 - why they're hard to uncover
 - what to do with them once you've got 'em
- what *is* an organizational information system?

why study organizations?

- most information systems are used:
 - in organizations
 - for organizations
 - between organizations
- need to understand the organization
 - so that we can understand what systems should do
 - so that we can understand how systems will be used
 - so that we can understand how people work
 - so that we can make systems more successful

why study organizations?

- because we so often get it wrong!
 - technology matters, but when people are involved, people always matter more



why study organizations?

- because we so often get it wrong!
 - technology matters, but when people are involved, people always matter more
 - things that never work:
 - forcing a system down people's throats
 - telling users that you know better than they do
 - complaining that it isn't your fault the system failed
- not just about understanding the user's work
 - need to understand the user's *point of view*

what is an organization?

- examples

what is an organization?

- examples
 - IBM, Apache Foundation, UCI, the Mafia
 - what do these have in common?
 - in what ways do they differ?

what is an organization?

- examples
 - IBM, Apache Foundation, UCI, the Mafia
 - what do these have in common?
 - in what ways do they differ?
- definition
 - organizations are arrangements of people and processes that achieve collective action

organizational conundrums

- how do organizations achieve their goals?
 - *organizations* don't do things; *people* do
 - why do people do what organizations want?
 - why do organizations do what people want?
- how do organizations learn and survive?
 - organizations last longer than their members
 - is IBM really the same organization now as in 1930?

organizations and information

- organizations depend on information
 - information about their own processes
 - how quickly can we build a widget?
 - how much does it cost us to make one?
 - are our costs increasing or decreasing?
 - information about clients and customers
 - what sorts of widgets do people want?
 - when do they buy them?
 - information about what's going on
 - when will the new widget line be ready?
 - who is responsible for managing the process?

organizations and IS

- information systems
 - collect information
 - transmit information
 - store information
 - retrieve information
 - process information
 - display information

organizations and IS

- information systems
 - collect information
 - transmit information
 - store information
 - retrieve information
 - process information
 - display information
- but...
 - who decides what information should be collected?
 - to whom is the information transmitted & displayed?
 - what can organizations do once they have it?

how to succeed in 132

- do the reading
 - especially, pay attention to the case studies
- look for examples around you; *apply* concepts
 - places you've worked
 - organizations you deal with (e.g. as a customer)
 - in the newspapers
- ask questions

example

- the impact of a highly significant technology...

example: vertical filing

- what was the world like before filing cabinets?



example: vertical filing



example: vertical filing

- lessons
 - organizations depend on processing information
 - information transforms organizations
 - what they can do
 - how they can do it
 - “technology” isn’t always “hi-tech”
 - small changes can have massive repercussions

who studies organizations?

- systems analysts & consultants
 - systems need to be tailored to contexts of use
 - organizational contexts are often the most significant
 - most technical problems have an organizational component
 - many “technical” problem are entirely organizational
- if they’re smart, all system developers
 - if your system will be used by an organization, shouldn’t you know how to study it?

how to study organizations?

- background and theory
 - how do organizations work? what do they do?
- case studies
 - examples show us how these work in practice
 - opportunities to learn how to look at problems
 - no formulas or absolutes – this is about looking at problems through the right kinds of lenses
- qualitative techniques – going and looking
 - quantitative techniques are about *numbers* of things
 - qualitative techniques are about *kinds* of things
 - so when do we use each one?

what will we do?

- learn about organizations
 - what they do
 - how they work
- learn about information systems
 - how they support organizational work
- learn about requirements gathering
 - how do we find out what's going on?
- project
 - a chance to practice

what will we do?

- metaphors for organizations
- aspects of organizations & information systems
 - e.g. business processes
 - e.g. information management
- carrying out qualitative investigations
- further topics
 - e.g. security
 - e.g. knowledge management

questions to ask

- where does control reside?
 - information systems both *constrain* and *enable*
 - structuring the system in any given way opens up some opportunities but closes down others
 - what new opportunities does a system open up?
- whose purposes are served?
 - different information is valuable to different people
 - information comes with points of view
 - hence, so do systems... c.f. Conway's Law

questions to ask

- what are the impacts?
 - what role does information play?
 - how will that role be affected by new technologies?
 - information can become more detailed and easier to process
 - how might that transform the organisation?
 - example: outsourcing internal services; Dell

next time...

- metaphors for organizations
 - three ways to think of organizations
 - what they tell us about organizations and information
 - come armed with some examples...

but first

- a quick survey
 - *survey*, not *test*