

"The Functions of Information Technology in Modern Corporation"

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[Summary]

This paper describes the impact of some emergent information processing technologies upon the change of business process in corporations. In particular, it focuses attention on Groupware---computer packages based on networks---and its contribution to performance of individuals and organizations. Groupware is based on the concepts developed in Computer Supported Collaborative Work(CSCW), which, as its name suggests, represents a broad variety of collaborative activities, from daily conversations to high-level, creative, group works.

Groupware, the incarnation of CSCW concepts, has now become an indispensable tool to the modernization of business activities. Besides being a complementary tool for management, now it can be seen as an essential tool for reorganizing individuals works and corporations structures. The acceptance of groupware in corporations can be explained by considering management, technological, and social aspects.

The concepts of business process re-engineering (BPR) and virtual corporations share some commonalities with groupware in that they all contribute to change the business activities having information processing technology in the basement. However, the success of the former two depend upon whether CSCW is put in the center of those processes or as a mere secondary aid in the down-sizing process.

We argue that such a global theme as increasing white-collar's productivity should not be constrained by the narrow motivation of cost reduction via rationalization of business processes and the consequent decrease in the number of employees. CSCW should not be seen as a mere tool for easy restructuring. It has three potential capabilities: (1) creation of new values, (2) support for collaborative work, and (3) re-designing the organization and the working environment. Making full use of these capabilities, we can make CSCW as a driving force to shift the paradigm towards increasing the productivity of white-collars.

POLICY SCIENCE (Ritsumeikan University),
2-2, Dec.1994 and 3-2, Feb.1996