

Chapter XIV

Experiences from Technology Transfer Initiatives at SISU

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Abstract

The institute SISU (Swedish Institute for Systems Development) was formed by the Swedish government in 1984 based on the support of more than 20 organisations in business, industry and in the civic sector. SISU operated during 1985 to 2000. In this chapter we reflect on our experiences from this initiative to technology transfer in Sweden in the field of information systems development tools and methods. We are concerned with transfer of knowledge as well as of technical prototypes from

academic research to product development, exploitation, and practical use in organisations. We reflect over a number of collaborative projects, national as well as EU-supported, initiated by SISU. We describe, firstly, which were the main “products” of technology transfer, and, secondly, which are the main factors that influence (or hinder) the success of a technology transfer initiative of this kind. The purpose of writing this chapter is to contribute to the experiences of the European Commission of successful technology transfer activities in Europe.

Introduction

Sweden's first university department in information systems was established in 1966. Research on methods and tools for information systems development started almost immediately, primarily by the research groups CADIS and ISAC. Research as well as publication activities of these and other groups during the seventies has been extensively described in the 40th anniversary book, published by the department (Bubenko, Jansson, Koller, Ohlin, & Yngström, 2006). University research in Sweden started to grow during the seventies. Several persons in organisations in business, industry as well as in the public sector showed a considerable interest in this research. In the early eighties the situation had matured so much that a question could be formulated: can knowledge and technology transfer from university research to practical application be somehow facilitated and enhanced?

In this chapter we reflect on our experiences from an initiative to technology transfer in the field of information systems in Sweden. We are concerned with transfer of knowledge as well as of technical prototypes from academic research to product development, exploitation, and practical use in organisations. Our experiences emanate from our work in SISU – the Swedish Institute for Systems Development. SISU was formed in 1984 and existed until the end of 2000. In this chapter we wish to describe, firstly, which are the main “products” of technology transfer, and, secondly, which are the main factors that influence (or hinder) the success of a technology transfer initiative.

Background

SISU was formed in 1984 as a result of an initiative by SYSLAB (the SYSTEMS development LABoratory at the department of computer and systems science,

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