

**Chapter XVI**

# **Teaching Enterprise Systems in a Distance Education Mode**

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This chapter discusses the needs and opportunities for teaching comprehensive business applications, Enterprise Systems, in the form of academic distance education courses. Specific factors of the educational market in Enterprise Systems such as high demand, limited resources or the increased importance of Application Hosting Centers will be described. An appropriate learning model will be selected that stresses the role of the lecturer as a moderator. The subject, Process Engineering at Queensland University of Technology, is taken as an example in order to discuss different forms of distance and also collaborative education in Enterprise Systems. The summary includes recommendations and sketches possible future directions.

## **THE NEED TO TEACH ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION MODE**

### **Characteristics of Enterprise Systems**

A new class of packaged application software has emerged over the past decade. Various called Enterprise Resource Planning Systems, Enterprise-wide Systems, Enterprise Business Systems or just Enterprise Systems, these

comprehensive software solutions seek to integrate the complete range of a business's processes and functions in order to present a holistic view of the business from a single information and IT architecture. An Enterprise System can be defined as customizable standard software that supports the main business processes of a company (Rosemann, 1999).

As off-the-shelf solutions, they consist of integrated applications for the main functions, such as procurement, production management, warehousing, sales and distribution, financial and managerial accounting, human resource management and quality management. In the most cases, industry-specific solutions are available, which include applications demanded by industries such as aerospace, automotive, banking, chemicals, consumer products, engineering, healthcare, higher education, insurance, mining, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, retail, telecommunications or utilities. Enterprise Systems are based on one integrated logical database. Consequently, vendor master data entered in the materials management module are, for example, also available in the accounts payable module. Enterprise Systems have one common user interface across all modules that can be individualized for users or user groups.

Currently, the main Enterprise Systems vendors are SAP, J.D. Edwards, Oracle and PeopleSoft. Among these, SAP solutions are the dominant application, claiming more than 50 % of the Enterprise Systems market. The Gartner Group forecasts that the Enterprise Systems market will be greater than \$20 billion by 2002 (with a probability of 80%) (Gartner Group, 1999). According to their prediction, more than 50% of this will be Enterprise Systems service revenue, while the total Enterprise Systems license revenue will amount to about \$9 billion. The Gartner Group also estimates that more than 90% of Fortune 500 enterprises have purchased a module or a set of modules from an Enterprise Systems vendor. The market for small- and medium-sized enterprises is identified as the main customer group, as more than 50% of these enterprises have not yet selected a next-generation Enterprise Systems. For 2001 (2002), the Gartner Group predicts market growth of 25% (28%). These figures show that Enterprise Systems initiatives are among the biggest investments to which enterprises are currently committing. This trend is likely to continue as a second wave of Enterprise Systems (ERP II) is emerging, which extends these systems towards interbusiness processes such as Customer Relationship Management and Supply Chain Management (Gartner Group, 2000).

A range of influences has encouraged the increasing uptake of Enterprise Systems, which already account for a substantial portion of the world-installed base of application software. Global competitive pressures promot-

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