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QUT professor awarded \$375k business model grant

By Michelle Hammond
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An associate professor at Queensland University of Technology has been awarded a \$375,000 Australian Research Council grant to develop a theory for effective business process models.

According to QUT associate professor Jan Recker, business process models are commonly used throughout businesses as a graphical representation of a business and its processes.

“They’re the flowcharts that tell a business’s story in pictures. The models are blueprints of organisational processes,” Recker said.

“They’re crucial for not only understanding how a business works but good, accurate models lead to good decisions being made.”

“They tell a business manager exactly how their business is operating and let them see how changes could be made to increase revenues, grow their business, [etc.]”

Recker says the key challenge with current models is that they are often too complex, large and cumbersome to be incorporated into the day-to-day review and operations of a business.

“Businesses often spend a lot of time and money developing these models or flowcharts, but the reality is that they are often not used, making them a wasted investment,” he says.

“Our research aims to determine what works best for processing modeling, and help organisations develop simplified models and make the best decisions with them.”

Recker says the competitive nature of the grant means the eligibility criteria is “not bound by projects or disciplines”, so he was up against projects in medicine and health, IT, etc.

“Applicants submit proposals based on the innovative [nature] of their organisation, and the capabilities of the people doing [the project]. There is a pot of money, which is allocated to the best proposals,” he says.

Recker says there were more than 2,000 applications for the funding round that he entered, of which just over 200 were selected. He believes his project was selected primarily because of its scope.

“One part will be the potential contribution it can make – the knowledge can be applied to all sorts of businesses. That was probably a very appealing factor,” he says.

“The other part of that is that here at QUT, our team has very good credentials. We’re well known for this type of research, so that also helps.”

Recker says the funding will be used for two purposes, the first of which will see the appointment of a teaching assistant for Recker, freeing his time to concentrate on the project.

The remainder of the funding will be used to provide a scholarship to a student who will work alongside Recker as he completes the project.

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