

SCHEEER

The IDS Scheer Management Magazine
for Business Process Excellence

Magazine



The process company

Driven by IT or culture?

Branding

Coca-Cola in sync around the globe

ARIS ProcessWorld 2008

Orlando, Berlin, Hong Kong

Mecca for BPM Researchers

Brisbane, Australia is home to one of the world's most prominent research groups for business process management. Join us on a visit to the Queensland University of Technology.

September 2007: For the first time, the International Conference on Business Process Management took place outside of Europe. 270 participants traveled to Brisbane, Australia, a city of 1.7 million people, to attend the conference – more than twice as many as in past years. But the reason for the excellent turnout was not the year-round warm weather found in “Brissie,” as Australians affectionately call the capital of Queensland. Ever since Michael Rosemann and Arthur ter Hofstede founded the Business Process Management Group at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in 2004, Brisbane has evolved into a preeminent location for BPM research. The 40-person institute is also part of IDS Scheer's research network.

In professional and academic circles, QUT's BPM experts are known for their substantial contributions to areas such as BPM maturity and workflow patterns. SAP also collaborates closely with the team. It's no wonder then that Arther ter Hofstede is one of the five most often-quoted IT professors in the world.

There are several reasons for the Australians' tremendous success. One of them is the active support provided by industry and the state government. “We want to be interna-

tional leaders in business process management,” announced a Queensland official, underlining the state's commitment to the task. It even commissioned the Brisbane-based researchers to optimize its processes. But Queensland's public administration is only one of their many customers. Major players such as Rio Tinto, Suncorp, and SAP Research are also on its list of industry partners.

German customers are amazed at how openly these companies communicate. Founded by the group's leader Michael Rosemann four years ago, the Australian BPM Community of Practice (www.bpm-roundtable.com) serves as a forum where BPM managers meet every three months to discuss ideas and case studies. Even competitors attend and talk about their problems with business process modeling and implementation. Currently, the group is working together on a reference model for the process of process improvement.

Jan Recker, 28, is intimately familiar with the differences between the German and Australian BPM scenes. He earned his doctorate at QUT under Michael Rosemann and will begin teaching there June 2008. The German completed his prior studies in Münster, where his supervisor once earned his PhD



degree. "BPM research in Germany primarily focuses on software design," says Recker, "while here in Brisbane, we also address social and organizational issues."

One of his areas of interest deals with the user acceptance of BPM tools, in other words the factors that influence a customer in deciding to purchase a particular product. A key aspect of any study is how a solution benefits the customer. Accordingly, Recker and a team of students took a close look at the IT service processes of his employer: the university. Ultimately, their recommendations helped it to identify AU\$1.5 million in potential cost savings.

Many of the students participate in similar projects to complete their degrees. Internships give them an opportunity to take a look at an industry partner's processes and develop solution proposals that often result in more flexible and cost-effective processes. The reward: the business world essentially helps to fund expansion of the university's BPM cluster and students often benefit by being offered lucrative jobs.

Social science issues also of interest

Rosemann's researchers also work on current business process management trends. On the technical side, the most critical ones are service-oriented architectures and web services as well as a BPM maturity model and model-driven automatic processes. Process flexibility is another emerging topic. For example, the research team is analyzing various processes associated with the call center.

The underlying reason for the analysis: during the subtropical storm season that runs from October to March, the call center has to process more than twice as many claims as in other months. In this research project, the team will study how to use ARIS to model context-sensitive processes that automatically show only those options required for a given situation (e.g., weather, location, or market conditions).

The BPM tool developed by IDS Scheer has been an integral component of QUT's academic program since 1998. The university purchased 60 licenses for ARIS 7 because "it is the predominant tool on the market," says Recker. Starting in 2008, the school will offer a master's program in business process management in which students use ARIS both as a tool and a research object. QUT's master's program is one of the few programs in the world with an emphasis on BPM, attesting to the growing significance of business process management. ○



Michael Rosemann is head of the Business Process Management Group at Queensland University of Technology. The institute is a member of the IDS Scheer research network.

What BPM can achieve

Topic of the Research Project

A reference model for film production: production-related value chain, including up- and downstream processes.

Project Team / Institute

Business Process Management Group, Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia, in collaboration with the Australian Film Television and Radio School as well as a network of companies involved in the production of movies such as Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings.

Primary Challenge

Managing pockets of creativity, i.e., critical process steps that require personnel to be highly creative.

Solution

The film production process was systematically modeled on several levels in ARIS and the pockets of creativity were systematically identified. The open source workflow management system YAWL (Yet Another Workflow Language) is used to support these processes.

Results The current implementation uses YAWL to support the entire production of a movie with the help of mobile computers and PDAs.

Benefits Project manager Prof. Michael Rosemann said, "We are confident that our solution will open doors to business process management in fast-growing creative industries. Systematic process analysis and improvement can give the dynamic specifications associated with movie production the required transparency and decision-making support."