Collaboration technologies

Business, Management

Strategic Information Technology 11th November Collaboration Technologies Introduction Collaboration technologies allow many participants to augment a common deliverable (WordiQ. com 2010). Typical mechanisms of collaboration technologies include document management and discussions which are designed to capture the efforts of a number of individuals into a single managed content environment.

Groupware

According to Coleman (1967, p. 1) groupware is a broad term which describes the electronic technologies that support person-to-person collaboration. It supports efforts of people working together even though they may not be together at the same location and time. Groupware minimises interference by technology while maximising interaction among several persons. Laudon and Laudon (2007, p. 287) indicates that groupware provides the required capabilities for collaborative work and communication across an enterprise of between persons and groups. It is used to write and comment on group projects, share important ideas and documents, conducting meetings electronically, tracking projects, scheduling activities and sending e-mails.

WordiQ, com (2010) indicates that there are three levels of collaboration and by so doing makes collaboration technologies synonymous with groupware. The three levels of groupware which are dependent on the level of collaboration are communication tools, conferencing tools and collaborative management tools. Electronic communication tools transmit messages, files, data and documents between persons in order to facilitate information sharing. These tools include: email, web publishing and voice mail. Electronic

conferencing tools facilitate interaction between persons in the transmission of information. These tools include video conferencing systems, voice conferencing, video conferencing, discussion forums, chat rooms and electronic meeting systems. Collaborative management tools both facilitate as well as manage group activities. They include project management systems workflow systems, electronic calendars and knowledge management systems.

According to Marotta (2006) some of the benefits of groupware include its ability to increase efficiency and effectiveness by allowing each member of a group to access all information pertinent to a particular task. It also stimulates creativity as ideas can be easily shared and individuals are able to benefit from each other. In so doing valuable insight is shared that can lead to the success of a project.

Desktop video conferencing

Desktop video conferencing relates to teleconferencing which includes video communication by way of a desktop computer. It facilitates two way communications between persons or groups in different locations. Video teleconferences may also be carried out in a way that would appear as if all participants are in the same room. It can be used to conduct meetings, interviews and giving lectures and therefore has the advantage of reducing the need to travel, especially over long distances. Care must be taken when setting time as night and day may differ in different time zones (WordiQ. com 2010)

Electronic Meeting System

Electronic meeting system (EMS) is computer software that enables decision

making among persons within organisations. It is a conferencing system which is built into a particular space such as a special purpose room which can facilitate a projector screen which is linked to several personal computers which are part of a network. Prior to the meeting, participants are provided with an outline of the meeting agenda. Ideas are put forward by participants and are projected on the computer screen in order to allow for discussion. The software is normally capable of carrying out a poll in order to gain consensus on a particular matter. An advantage is that it allows participants to be anonymous and therefore prevent interpersonal issues form negatively impacting decision-making. Ideas are therefore assessed on their merits and not on the originator (WordiQ. com 2010).

References

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