Practical applications of document-driven decision support systems essay sample

A Decision Support System (DSS) is defined and compared to Management Information Systems by Power (2000) as a broad category of analytical management information systems that provide managers control of their data, access to analytical tools, and capabilities for consulting and interacting with a distributed group of staff (p. 7). Having a DSS will enable managers to organize and categorize information and enable them to generate decisions by real-time interaction and online analysis of the information, which is typical of one of its type, the document-driven DSS.

Document-driven DSS is ideal for broad-based access, distribution and analysis of information. When the users of the information are growing or diversifying, it is ideal to provide updated information to the user base in a timely fashion. A practical application for document-driven DSS is to enable a global organization's portal to be the central source of its users and customers for information.

A practical example in applying document-driven DSS would be for a global professional Engineering association that may have a membership of more than 50, 000 engineers from various countries in the world. Such association was established more than thirty years ago, to safeguard their industry's high level of services and ensure consistency in their delivery of services at any part of the world. To uphold such mission, members should have access to best practices in the industry, industry-wide laws and country specific-laws that are significant in each of their local practices. The mere complexity of being a global organization already mandates an information system that requires unification. In addition, its longstanding history of information from days of manual computation need updating and marrying

with modernized versions of latest technology. For this organization, a web-based, document-driven DSS is ideal.

The first step is to create a document management system. A content server must be set-up at the organization's corporate location. Its incorporation and by-laws documents must be digitalized in native format (word processing file) to allow for all the users to view information right from their browser. Such information are hosted in the content server but uploaded in HTML format for easier viewing or a read-only PDF version to allow subscribed members to download personal file copy. After the database set-up, a content management system is necessary to manage and update the contents timely.

The website should also allow members to contribute and update content through the Web browser. At the time of contribution, metadata is assigned to each piece of content, allowing for the information to be retrievable and categorized. Once content is submitted, a content publisher can publish the information by automatically converting them to the native formats, without the need for manual conversion by the Web master, and allow him or his team to focus on content approval. As soon as the content is approved, the content is immediately updated, thus the timeliness publication to its global membership.

Apart from the database and content management, the document-driven DSS structure should also allow for imaging for visual data publication, records management for member certification and global supplier qualifications and business process management services for internal and

external industry services that allow for speedy delivery and lower over-all cost by maximizing virtual tools adjunct to the DSS.

With a web-based document-driven DSS, the global professional organization can have a robust system of spreading information, obtaining on-the-ground updates and developing their industry by offering globally standard and easily accessible services to both its members and intended customers.

Reference

Power, D. J. (2000, Sept. 24). Decision Support System Hyperbook. Supporting Business Decision-Making (Chap1). Retrieved from the web on Feb. 10, 2006, http://dssresources. com/dssbook/ch1sbdm. pdf