WARWICK
BUSINESS SCHOOL

Information Systems and Management (ISM) Forum

Spring Term 2008

Speaker: **Professor Brian Fitzgerald, University of Limerick, Ireland**

Title: **Open Source Software Adoption: Anatomy of Success and Failure**

Date: **Wednesday 27 February 2008**

Venue: **Room B3.19, Warwick Business School, Scarman Road**

Time: **14.30 – 16.00**

Abstract: Current estimates suggest widespread adoption of open source software (OSS) in organizations worldwide. However, the problematic nature of OSS adoption is readily evidenced in the fairly frequent reports of problems, unforeseen hold-ups, and outright abandonment of OSS implementation over time. This seminar reports the case of an Irish public sector organization, who embarked on the adoption of a range of OSS applications over several years, some of which have been successfully deployed and remain in live use within the organisation, whereas others, despite achieving high levels of assimilation over a number of years, have not been ultimately retained in live use in the organization. Using a longitudinal case study, we discuss in depth the deployment process for two OSS applications – the desktop application suite whose deployment was unsuccessful ultimately, and the email application which was successfully deployed. To our knowledge, this is the first such in-depth study into successful and unsuccessful OSS implementation. Given that our study was a longitudinal one in a single organization, we can control a number of potentially important influencing elements which would not be possible if multiple organizations were involved. In particular, the complex interaction of issues to do with voluntariness of adoption, image, trialability and absorptive capacity were critical influences in the process.

Biography: Brian Fitzgerald holds an endowed professorship, the Frederick A Krehbiel II Chair in Innovation in Global Business & Technology, at the University of Limerick, Ireland, where he is also Research Fellow and Research Leader for Global Software Development at Lero – the Irish Software Engineering Research Centre. He was formerly at University College Cork, and held positions as Visiting Professor in the Austria, Italy, Sweden, UK and the US. He received his PhD from the University of London and his research interests lie primarily in the area of software development, a broad area which encompasses the use of development methods, globally-distributed software development, agile methods and open source software. His publications include 10 books, and more than 100 papers in leading international journals and conferences in both the Information Systems and Software Engineering fields. Having worked in industry prior to taking up an academic position, he has more than 20 years experience in the software field. This experience was gained in a variety of industry sectors (telecoms, manufacturing, financial services, education and software houses) in a number of countries (Ireland, UK, Belgium, Germany).

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