Training (Archive)

Around the world various universities and other tertiary institutions are responsible for developing and offering courses aimed at developing information managers. This column, which will be updated regulary, aims to investigate and report back on the nature and content of some of these information management courses. This issue addresses the features of two schools, namely the School of Information Management and Systems at the University of California (Berkeley), and the Wellington Polytechnic in New Zealand.

Interdisciplinary approach to training of information managers

Information managers must be familiar with the technology used to store, organise and retrieve information in business, government and academic settings. However, technical expertise alone is not sufficient for success; information managers will need to understand how to organise information; they will need to design front-ends to information systems that allow for efficient and effective user interaction; they will need management skills to direct the development and deployment of software systems; and they must be able to assure the quality of information and its value to those who will use it for decision making. Most importantly, they will need to understand the economic and social environment in which their enterprise functions.

Such a profession is inherently interdisciplinary, requiring aspects of computer science, cognitive science, business, law, information studies and communication studies. The mission of the School of Information Management and Systems at the University of California, Berkeley, as stated in their Web site, is therefore to educate information managers who are skilled in locating, organising, manipulating, filtering and presenting information.

The Master of Information Management and Systems is a two-year interdisciplinary programme designed to train students in the skills needed to succeed as information managers. This programme advances, through teaching and research, the organisation, management and use of information and information technology, and enhances understanding of the impact of information on individuals, institutions and society. The programme has both a technical component, concerned with the design and use of information systems and services, and a social sciences component, concerned with understanding how people seek, obtain, evaluate, use and categorise information.

The primary educational mission of the programme is to prepare professionals who can develop improved approaches to handling information, design and manage information functions, and merge them with other aspects of the enterprise. Evidence strongly suggests the existence of a very large demand for such professionals in business, government and the academic world.

Further information:

http://info.berkeley.edu/programs/overview.html

Master in Business Information

The Wellington Polytechnic in New Zealand offers a Master in Business Information programme. This programme aims to provide graduates for leadership roles at the strategic level of an enterprise in a dynamic business environment. Students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to provide effective leadership in an environment characterised by intensification of competition, internationalisation of business, technological advancement and changes in consumer values and lifestyles.

The duration of the programme is two years full-time, or the part-time equivalent. The first year is made up of course work. Courses are designed to develop an ability to think strategically and manage change. During the programme four thematic questions are explored:

- How can enterprises maintain a strategic fit with the external environment?
- How do enterprises adapt internally to strategic change?
- How can management of information and communication help enterprises gain a competitive advantage?
- How does an enterprise effectively conduct business in an international or locally diverse environment?

Students who successfully complete the first year's work may exit with a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Information. The second year involves writing a thesis under academic supervision.

Further information: http://webnz.com/wnp/html/objects/programs/mstb.htm

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