

In this issue:

Finland:
Criticism Important In
Information Retrieval
pages 1 and 2

Finland:
Pohjola's Intranet User
Numbers Have Multiplied
page 3

Russia:
Managers Consider
Information a Strategic
Resource
page 4

Send us feedback,
You can win!
See page 2

Publisher

Esmerk is part of the
SanomaWSOY Group
of Finland

Edition team

Timo Hämäläinen, Finland
Katya Levochskaya, Russia

Address

Esmerk Oy, P.O. Box 31,
FIN-00089 SANOMAT

Telephone +358 9 1221

Fax +358 9 122 4325

E-mail esmerk@sanoma.fi

Internet www.esmerk.com

Lay-out Pirta Mikkola

Print Käpyläprint Oy

Quarter is published
4 times a year.

Finland

Petteri Järvinen:

Criticism Important In Information Retrieval

Researcher **Petteri Järvinen**, acting Communications Director of the Finnish multiservice operator Jippii Group rarely utilises profiled news services. As a researcher he is used to finding things himself on the Internet. On the other hand, Järvinen understands that information services are important for those who do not have the time to look for the information themselves. He continues that managers who monitor several sectors or those who travel a lot can benefit from profiled information services.

Criticism Important in Information Retrieval

Järvinen emphasises use of criticism and initiative since they help in finding the right information even on the Internet. – The Internet contains plenty of false information, however, that is the case also in traditional media, such as newspapers. This is partly due to the companies having too few employees, and the rush to be the first one to cover the news. What is the most shocking is that newspapers do not bother to correct their mistakes.



The Internet contains plenty of false information, says Researcher Petteri Järvinen, acting Communications Director of the Finnish multiservice operator Jippii Group.

Photo: Lehtikuva

Criticism Important In Information Retrieval, continues from page 1

– You cannot always rely on second-hand information. Forecasts and statistics are the least reliable sources. It's appalling to see companies utilise them in decision making.

Own Database Helps in Information Overflow

Even Järvinen struggles with information overflow. – One problem in looking for information yourself is that you end up reading the same piece of news several times on the electric sources. Thus, it would be good if there was only one source where you could find everything.

Information Services to Charge for Information

Järvinen forecasts that information services must soon begin charging for their services.

– For a long time the common opinion has been that information has to be available free of charge with advertisers funding the operations. That road is coming to an end soon since nobody will offer his services as charity forever. Internet services will become payable. At that time, service providers will have to offer such value added which will make the customer choose that precise service. The first thing that comes to mind is tailor-made services that can predict what their users are interested in.

Järvinen points out that people do not know even themselves beforehand what they will be interested in next. That is why a newspaper is an excellent source of information as it contains also such surprising information

that you would not have selected yourself off a list. For instance the culture section can contain valuable information.

Järvinen visions a payable service which would take into account the entire human being, more like loyal customer schemes do. If the profile of the information service included all the information on the user it could surprise the user with a piece of news regarding his hobby.

Visual Effect and Emotions also into Financial News

Visual effect, Järvinen says, is the trend of the day. – It will become more common also in payable services. Currently unrelated human-interest features are still considered vulgar, but even financial news will in the future include visual and emotional stimulation. Even Esmerk services will include images and video clips that are not necessarily connected to the subject but bring visual elements to the service.

Information services will face a change when the next generation enters working life. That generation has grown up looking for information themselves on the Internet. The change in attitudes will take another ten or fifteen years.

Järvinen: Mobile Phone News Unnecessary

Järvinen does not have faith in mobile news services as directed to private people. – I cannot think of such an important piece of news that I would need to read it first on

my mobile phone. If I was interested, say, in Formula 1, I would rather watch the race.

Järvinen criticises mobile services of having been designed for people with no work or home. At work people sit all day in front of a computer display and at home there is already a television set where everything can be seen better. – Maybe in ten years' time the mobile phone might have a screen attachment, but that is a major question mark. Designers of mobile services have not understood the true needs of the large majority. ■

Kirsi Autio

Translated by Sanna Termonen

ESMERK ABSTRACTS RELATED TO THIS ARTICLE:

Finland: Information society divides the nation
Keskisuomalainen, 08 Aug 2001, p.18:-
ESMERK/FINNISH/EF.KA

Finland: Nokia manager: Internet to change management
Ilkka, 12 Jun 2001, p.13:-
ESMERK/FINNISH/EF.ST

Finland: Business Intelligence demand growing
ITViikko, 09 Aug 2001, s.18:-
ESMERK/FINNISH/EF.

PLEASE SEND US FEEDBACK

You can win an Esmerk watch!

Please, tell us Your opinion about articles in this Quarter

	Highly interesting	Moderate	Not in my area of interest
Criticism Important In Information Retrieval	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pohjola's Intranet User Numbers Have Multiplied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managers Consider Information a Strategic Resource	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would like to read more about _____

Name _____ Title _____

Company _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Telephone and fax _____



Photo: Outi Järvinen

SEND THIS FORM before 1 November 2001 to Esmerk Finland by fax +358 9 122 4325 or e-mail us at esmerk@sanoma.fi

YOUR NEAREST ESMERK OFFICE: Estonia fax +372 6261 322, e-mail estonia@esmerk.net Finland fax +358 9 122 4325, e-mail esmerk@sanoma.fi Sweden fax +46 8 6458 866, e-mail sweden@esmerk.net Russia fax +7 812 3295 709, e-mail sales@esmerk.ru

Finland

Pohjola's Intranet User Numbers Have Multiplied

Intra-company communications is nowadays more and more often based on various intranet solutions. However, employees do not always know how to get to all the information available. On the other hand, the working pace is often so tight that employees simply do not have the time to look for information. Finnish Insurance Group Pohjola woke up to the problem and managed to find a cure for it.

Information Specialist **Liisa Maunula** says she got tired of always hearing complaints about people not being able to find anything on the Pohjola intranet or not having enough time to use it. She wrote down special daily user instructions for the intranet. The instructions pointed out everything you can find on the intranet with only five minutes per day. After the tips appeared in Pohjola's personnel magazine user numbers of the intranet increased considerably. For instance, user numbers for the Esmerk news service which is also included in the intranet doubled over a relatively short period of time.

Maunula says the intranet needs special attractions to get people to use it. One such

hook on the Pohjola intranet is the "Today" column which includes general interest stories and amusement. Another highly popular column is "Questions and Answers" where employees can ask anything anonymously.

Using the Intranet is a Question of Age

Pohjola has about 2,500 employees and the average age is currently above 40 years. The average age rose during the recession years when the group was unable to recruit new, young employees. Liisa Maunula admits that the high average age brings along certain problems. Younger people are used to computers and they are accustomed

to looking for information from various sources. Thus, using the intranet is a natural thing for the young, whereas the middle-aged generation still likes to feel the paper. Still, well over 90% of Pohjola employees utilise the corporate intranet actively.

On the other hand Maunula says that the company should not be lulled into contentment. Whenever one reaches a certain level and thinks it is safe to take a breather, the next change is on the way.

Maunula agrees that people do have to be shaken up every now and again.

The corporate intranet has to be developed continuously as well. There is a banner reminding the users of all the contents available and Pohjola intends to remind users also about the possibility to monitor the business environment through Esmerk news service.

Information Services Still Necessary

Pohjola closed down its own information service department at the end of 1999. Maunula says that information services are still needed as background information is always necessary. The basic information needed in controlling business operations has to be stored somewhere in a well structured form. In the future, information will be available in electric form, as a network service. Business Intelligence portal could be a good solution. That, again, requires professional information specialists as the information overflow calls for systematic control.

– The need for information is getting more diverse all the time, Maunula says. International events and product development are more and more important information. Meanwhile, it is important to monitor which way the society is heading.

Terho Rehmonen

Translated by Sanna Termonen



Insurance Group Pohjola is one of the oldest clients of Esmerk. Information Specialist Liisa Maunula has a good insight into the way the service has developed over the years.

Photo: Sanna Liimatainen

ESMERK ABSTRACTS RELATED TO THIS ARTICLE:

Germany: Computer training with intranet

Stuttgarter Zeitung, 21 Aug 2001, p.10:-
/ESMERK/GERMAN/EL.VVX

UK: Tesco links staff to intranet

Computing, 09 Aug 2001, p.5:-
/ESMERK/ENGLISH/EN.PIC

Germany: Adidas to use intranet to improve access

Computing, 26 Jul 2001, p.15:-
/ESMERK/ENGLISH/EN.PIC

UK: New intranet project

Computer Weekly, 07 Jun 2001, online:-
/ESMERK/ENGLISH/EN.PIC

Russia

Managers Consider Information a Strategic Resource



Trying to cope with an unstructured mass of chaotically stored information, and furthermore, bringing it into an electric system to serve for years seems like a rather serious challenge. **Alexander Plotkin**, the head of the St. Petersburg-based accounting software company **Monolit** and at the same time the Information Systems Management Professor at a prominent local business school, has been dealing with this problem on the territory of the CIS for over a decade. The expert in his field, Mr. Plotkin highlights some of the most recent trends in information management in Russia for **Esmerk Quarter**.

Right now the radical change in how managers view information takes place. Traditionally companies used to seek competitive advantage in various sources, originally, these were the concentrated forces, then the networks, and now when the market is not wild anymore in Russia, it is information, that allows a

at information system as a tool of achieving competitive advantage. As a result, the development of information systems strategy is in line with the general corporate strategy.

IT Managers Taken Seriously

The role of IT managers is obviously growing with the development of information technology. A study made in Scandinavia showed that over 50% of local IT managers were appointed to top managerial positions. – This trend signifies that these people take active part in the business management process. I do not rule out the possibility of this happening in the Russian society in the near future, Mr. Plotkin says.

effectively. Sometimes they spend the money unwisely in order to meet the requirements of their headquarters.

It is highly important to understand the role of information in the business of a company. Companies should clearly categorize information systems as potential, strategic, key and supporting, and adjust the development and the budgeting policies accordingly. International companies already understand this. Russian companies are just getting there. ■

Yekaterina Levochskaya



Source: International Management Institute St. Petersburg

company to gain competitive advantage. At this stage, in Mr. Plotkin's opinion, it is vital to see information as one of the main resources.

Strategy Goes First

Mr. Plotkin says that positive change in the quality of managerial knowledge leads to a better understanding of the place information occupies in business processes. More and more top-managers start looking

depending on the size of the company and the business it operates in. – If top managers do not fully understand the importance of information, this reflects to the budget. Russian managers are willing to spend hundreds of dollars on expensive displays or laptops, but at the same time they will not spend any money on information. Multinationals have huge budgets, however, they do not always use the money

Budgets as Usual

– The budgets must depend on the category of the system, Mr. Plotkin says. They range

ESMERK ABSTRACTS RELATED TO THIS ARTICLE:

Russia: Elektronnaya Rossiya to get RUR 350mn in 2002
Kommersant-Daily, 31 Aug 2001, p.6:-
ESMERK/RUSSIAN/SM.JUL

Russia: New federal information program developed
Vedomosti, 18 Jun 2001, p.B1:-
/ESMERK/RUSSIAN/SM.JUL

Russia: Government adopts federal IT program
Delovoi Peterburg, 06 Jul 2001, p. 6:-
/ESMERK/RUSSIAN/SM.EVA

Esmerk supplies leading international companies with intelligently tailored essential information of their business environments. We now have tens of thousands end users throughout the world, being serviced by a staff of 150 in a network of 14 offices.



Next Quarter
will be published
in December 2001