



Mini-track ID: AMCIS-MT-006-2008.

Mini-track title: IS Challenges for Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs)

Track: General Topics

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Description

Information systems adoption seem to be related to the size of the adopting company, as smaller business units are less likely to invest in new technologies and use the Internet. The phenomenon has raised the interest of policy makers world-wide as they have realized that SMEs are in need for support and encouragement in order to invest on new technologies. Small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) represent a significant part of the world economy. In the European Union, for example, there are 18 million SMEs. They employ 66% of the workforce and are responsible for 55% of turnover. Nevertheless, IS uptake is lower in smaller firms than in larger firms, while reports from various OECD countries confirm that there is a correlation between the rate of adoption of the Internet and the firm size. Studies have shown that the wide acceptance of IS by SMEs has been slowed down by several country-specific barriers as well as resistance to change, lack of education/awareness about the potentials of IS/ICTs, lack of flexible software, shortage of skilled labor, lack of government assistance, inadequate technical training of employees and limited access to knowledge created by research institutions. Besides the barriers there are number of SMEs, which have managed to overcome initial problems and come up with interesting and workable solutions for their business or industry sectors.

The purpose of this mini-track is to provide a basis for presentation and discussion on related key issues, challenges as well as opportunities related to the adoption of and use of IS by SMEs. Authors are encouraged to submit papers on IS/ICTs related issues within the context of SMEs.

Suggested Topics

- Barriers and drivers of IS/ICTs adoption by SMEs
- Decision process and IS evaluation issues within SMEs
- Similarities and differences of IS adoption by SMEs and their larger counterparts
- Relationships of power between smaller and larger firms within industry sectors
- Level of employees' ICTs skills & expertise in for SMEs
- IS/ICTs personnel recruitment processes within SMEs
- IS Development vs outsourcing within SMEs
- SMEs and the adoption of e-commerce/enterprise systems (ERPs and CRMs)/ open source software
- SMEs and adoption of broadband & wireless technologies
- Policy issues related to IS diffusion to SMEs