



Confirmation economics | The Xpragmatic View



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Social networks, discussion groups, (micro-) blogging, sharing bookmarks... Never before it was easier to connect with like-minded people or people with the same interests. But perhaps that is becoming one of the problems of the Web. It has become too easy to find like-minded people or people with the same interests.

Last week, on an ERP website, we read a post written by Phil Simon, titled [What is Enterprise 2.0 and Why You Should Care](#).

The article is worth reading, but it is especially interesting since it originates from outside the "normal" Enterprise 2.0 community and consequently, gives a completely different perspective on the phenomenon Enterprise 2.0, with a focus on aspects that are almost completely out of scope in the regular Enterprise 2.0 discussions.

Enterprise 2.0 and ERP. Not exactly the most likely combination. We don't know what your current thinking is about ERP, but compared to the fuzzy world of the social web, ERP seems almost like something that comes with the building when you move in.

Still, such different perspectives are important since they provide conflicting or disconnected views on the same reality. Real solutions and progress emerge when we are able to unify these apparently conflicting views.

Unfortunately, we have to observe that such "cross-fertilisation" between different disciplines is largely missing.

As we have already mentioned before, Enterprise 2.0 is only one of the things we are interested in. Our other interests include diverse themes such as business agility, organisational change and Business Process Management (BPM). In our view, such broad interest is needed because all these "disciplines" are interlinked. You simply cannot implement one of these "solutions" without touching the other environments.

As a result, we are present in a (too large) variety of discussion groups; we monitor a multitude of RSS feeds, etc. However, this also allows us to observe that all these different disciplines are largely isolated worlds. Only on rare occasions, you will see discussions that cross the boundary of the own territory.

Of course, you cannot be a specialist in everything. You have to focus. It is also a better career move since we have never seen a job opening for someone "who knows a bit of everything". Still, we fear that there is a bit too much focus today.

The reasons are obvious. The Web with its multitude of social networks, discussion groups, (micro-) blogging and other sharing solutions gives ample opportunity to connect with (many) like-minded people or people with the same interests. However, the net result will be that your virtual inbox will be flooded by messages on the same themes: your own interests.

Moreover, given the nature of this social beast, we will especially read the things and connect to the people that provide confirmations of your own thinking. Since that is what we are essentially looking for.

So, in essence, we are not really looking for the disconnected views and anyway, there is no more room in our inbox. However, therefore, our learning will be slow.

The Enterprise 2.0 movement is now some three years old. Yet, only recently, we saw an avalanche of lists with "x reasons for Enterprise 2.0 failure" and "y ways to avoid Enterprise 2.0 failure". All very solid information, based upon the observations and analysis of the first series of implementations.

Unfortunately, very little of this is really new. Providing some serious thinking and multi-domain experience, most of this could have been written down three years ago. This largely describes the same types of challenges organisations have been facing in the past when trying to implement other types of solutions that touched the status quo of the organisation.

The context is a bit different, but the problems are largely the same. We could have known before if we wanted to know, but we prefer first learning by confirmation and then, implementing by confrontation. The opposite would have been the better approach.

Of course, it gives a somewhat heroic feeling when we are pushing forward against all odds.


Unfortunately, when the battle is over, most heroes are dead.

About the author



Marc Buyens is analyst, management consultant and owner of Xpragma. Marc started Xpragma in 1999 after a 20+ years career in the IT sector. Today, he provides advice, training and mentoring services focusing on the intersection of technological evolution, organisational change and business strategy: a messy world of unfulfilled promises.

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