



Professional article

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# Chain-computerisation vs classic automation

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## **Abstract:**

1. Chain-computerisation is generally based on process thinking;
2. Focusing on a predictable process with a clearly defined beginning and end;
3. Number systems, reference indexes, verification registers, etc. meet the call for an architecture that connects the existing autonomous ICT solutions from chain perspective;
4. Professionals experience an increasing gap between their information needs and the support they get from the available ICT facilities, including chain information facilities.

**Keywords:** classic automation, transition to chain-computerisation, paradigm shift, information worker, user transforms to determiner/director

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## **1 Explanation**

Chain-computerisation has evolved within the context of the rollout of ICT facilities. Organisational goals were translated to products, services and task descriptions for employees. Organisational ICT policies were mainly internally focused; creating stand alone 'solutions' in support of its own operations. This resulted in the famous 'island of automation'. The recognition of the common interest led to the interconnection of business organisations. Using packaged data in precooked messages, the fully predictable data flow between organisations was guaranteed. Later a more integrated approach for designing and building collaboration between organisations became common. A business case driven orientation, was followed with defined party roles. By each interaction process, roles were described and translated into business transactions and messages. This approach contains substantial more business logic in comparison with the earlier in this document projected approach. Employees of organisations, however, given this technically oriented environment did not have more than just a marginal participation. The employee as least important part in this 'construct'. That employees were designated as 'users' says more than enough about their limited influence.

### **1.1 ICT solutions and business as starting point; for how long?**

For the staff in most of the organisations was, within the performance of their duties, little room for individual interpretation and autonomous decisions. Currently, in this context, a steady gradient (r)evolution is taking place. Without compromising the older employee, the current situation shows that especially younger employees behave as skilled professionals who decide for themselves what information at what time is required. For them it is normal for work and private merge, the emergence of the information professional user, either: the 'information worker'. This new phenomenon will gradually become a dominant and permanent

position within the rapidly evolving information society. Employees who recognise themselves in this profile are increasingly dissatisfied with the 'support' the current ICT facilities within the organisation where they work. The required information is not available at the right time, at the desired location in the desired form and by the desired device. Adding more ICT equipment is no solution for better information. As long as processes enforce a certain obligation, the information worker will have to comply. However, when the information worker is given some room he/she will look for missing information that he/she allows to fulfil the assigned task optimally. Searching and finding constitutes the primary process of the information worker. The only, but very crisp, fundamental principle that information science is rich, reads: "Information is the answer to a question." The information worker comes into the picture especially in situations where employees are dedicated to a broad, less specifically defined set of tasks, often accompanied by a high degree of responsibility. Receptive to signals and a proactive attitude are other aspects that characterise the work of the information worker. Among other things within the police and the youth or family care one can find this situation.

## **1.2 Paradigm shift**

This is the essence of this transition exposed; ICT facilities would still preferably assist the information worker in fulfilling his/her information needs. This need is within the aforementioned examples difficult to determine in advance. ICT facilities and architectures are to be adapted and arranged in such manner that they are capable of providing the answers to questions in a flexible way. Notwithstanding that within this new situation there still remains the need for mechanisms and arrangements that allow the information worker to identify people and goods within a collection in full compliance with the applicable privacy law. Also important is the subject of the information worker that needs to know who, in addition to him-/herself, are also concerned with a person or a thing. Referring facilities are deemed to deliver this information up to date, meaningful and accessible. With the new Dutch law Care for Youth, the new system should be designed to accommodate the young, the family and the community around it again to enable themselves to solve problems, if necessary supported with temporary outside help. Municipalities are in this new situation, responsible for all the help, beginning with the lighter, preventive care to the heavier care. Their task is to provide all assistance to families in conjunction with each other and to bring an end to the scenarios in which social workers in the same family work past each other (and sometimes against each other). Municipalities are also responsible for prevention and early detection of problems with the safety of young people at risk or is likely to come. This is not an easy task and it brings an information problem with it that previously in this form definitely not existed.

In case a true paradigm shift occurred, the above given approach whereby the "information worker" stands at the centre of attention and we are able to find a suitable solution for the mentioned chain-computerisation issues, this complex task has a good chance of success. The ICT now and in the future has to comply with the information worker and not the other way!

## 2 Guidelines

1. Employees dedicated to a broad, less specifically defined set of tasks, often accompanied by a high degree of responsibility possibly meet the information workers characteristics.
2. The information workers role within the organisation has to become 'determiner/director' instead of 'user'.
3. Supporting the information worker does not end with the delivery/commissioning of the ICT resources that support him/her, then it just starts!
4. Chain-computerisation solutions (number systems, referral services, verification registers, etc.) can, if designed and decorated according to the above principles, deliver a substantial contribution in meeting the information needs of the information worker.

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**Biographical notes:** Gerrit van de Ven (1958) has his operational roots in the Military Police and Civil Police. In 1994 he successfully completed the study Information Science. Short after that he joined In-pact Foundation. After the termination of the In-Pact Foundation he continued his career as a senior consultant at In-pact private company. Gerrit has contributed to the development of a methodology for successfully (re-) analysis of (cold) cases and also developed/commissioned a number of national audits and monitors for the Board of Police Commissioners and the Department of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The most striking of these is the Police Monitor Prostitution and Trafficking. He is also one of the designers of the now abroad applied EBT (Electronic Message Traffic, in Dutch: EBV) method. In this context Gerrit developed, the business language i.e. the data dictionaries for the criminal justice system and the child welfare field. His interest in philosophy and cognitive science currently is very useful in his work as a (inter) national intelligence trainer.

