Comparing risks in individual software development and standard software implementation projects: A Delphi study

Abstract: This paper aims at exploring differences in risk profiles across various types of IS projects. IS project managers face a variety of risks. Before taking appropriate countermeasures, the first step in successfully managing risks is to identify and prioritize them. While many researchers have investigated risks in IS projects in general, few take into account the specific nature of different types of IS projects. However, discrepancies in extant risk rankings suggest that a project’s risk profile changes depending on which type of project is being investigated. In order to explore these differences across IS project types we conducted a Delphi study at a German-based financial services company in order to identify and compare the risk profiles of individual software development and standard software implementation projects. Our results comprise a) a list of 100 distinct IS project risks, which not only includes new risks but also emphasizes the importance of technical risks, and b) ranked risk profiles for
different types of IS projects. The heterogeneity of the risk profiles suggests that while there are indeed project-generic risks which are likely to occur across different types of IS projects, project-type-specific risks do considerably influence a project’s risk profile.

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