

**E2-38: Building the first Management Information System for a Sri Lankan University**

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A management information system (MIS) is essential for efficient book-keeping at any modern university. An educational MIS, or EMIS, when properly structured and developed, can be of immense benefit in streamlining operations

and enhancing efficiency. From simple processes like the generation of mailing labels to all students on roll in a particular programme, to complex operations like checking the satisfaction by a student of all graduation requirements, become trivial tasks and indeed, are free of the errors that are likely to accompany a manual process.

With this in mind, the Open University of Sri Lanka was the first to develop an EMIS for students. This is now being expanded to include all operations with a view to streamlining them. This paper describes the project the thinking by which it was decided to develop our own MIS, the advantages, of the problems that could have been obviated by purchasing a commercial MIS, and the experience in general from the project. The paper deals with the issues that had first to be dealt with in planning the system before embarking on development. Some of these are:

- (a) expensive high security servers against cheaper ones on which expertise is freely available in Sri Lanka
- (b) disallowing Internet access from the high security part of the network for fear of virus attacks.
- (c) the operating system for clients.

In Sri Lanka, there is an additional benefit of national significance. It has been determined by the UGC that university intake ought to be significantly increased to meet the nation's needs. However, those in authority are unable to meet this goal because of shortage in human resources. The EMIS under development therefore offers the prospect of increasing the efficiencies inherent to the distance mode of teaching and thereby significantly increasing the client pool of students earning degrees.