

Developing an internet based information centre for the Sri Lankan construction industry

Present day organizations regard information as an important corporate resource vital for organizational success. The developments in the field of information technology have opened up new avenues for efficient and effective management of information in construction. The following is a brief summary of a research initiative carried out at the University of Moratuwa, to develop an internet based information center for the Sri Lankan construction industry.

The literature reviewed recognizes the important role of information in organizations of the construction industry. Having analysed the information set-up of the Sri Lankan construction industry, the research identified the following as some of the prominent features. 1) Majority of standard information is available only in paper form and is not accessible from a central location. 2) Lack of indexes to guide the users who needs access to information. 3) Absence of a central location that could be used as a window to inform the revisions done to standard industry information. 4) Absence of a proper mechanism to document and communicate updated information to the ultimate users 5) Most project information exchange is done in paper form.

When providing central access to a wide variety of industry information, the research identified several challenges that need to be overcome. 1) Common information required are generated, compiled and used by different organizations located countrywide. 2) The format in which different users require information is not homogeneous. 3) The information provided should be available in a form, which could be directly used as inputs to IT enabled information processing. 4) Information should be updated and communicated to the end users. This research effort is focused on exploiting the Internet and allied technologies to address the crucial information needs of the construction industry. Following are some of the components of the outline structure of the information centre. * Industry calendars, * Directories, *Research forum, * Cost information, * Industry news, * Electronic tendering, * Virtual project teams, * Search engines, * E-commerce Construction IT zone, * hosting web pages.

The ability to be updated rapidly and the potential to be self-financing are two of the many highlighting features of the end product of this research.