

1997

SJIS Profile and Audience

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Recommended Citation

Mathiassen, Lars (1997) "SJIS Profile and Audience," *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/sjis/vol9/iss1/8>

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SJIS Profile and Audience

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Gro Bjercknes shares with us in the last issue of SJIS her disappointment when reading two of the contributions of SJIS Vol. 8, No. 1. One of these is a paper presenting “A Framework for Software Risk Management” that I have co-authored with Kalle Lyytinen and Janne Roppnen. Gro found that our paper might be useful for practitioners after some elaboration. But the generic questions are too general for practical use and Gro is disappointed that the framework has not been thoroughly tested in practice. Gro suggests, on a more general level, that the audience of SJIS is too narrowly defined as the research community and she encourage us to develop the journal and its contributions to include practitioners as users of research.

I understand and, to a large extent, share Gro’s comments to our paper. The paper is mainly theoretical in that it attempts to develop concepts and frameworks that can be used to understand, compare, and further develop specific approaches to software risk management. As such it is useful for everyone, researcher or practitioner, who studies or uses risk management approaches. Researchers might use it as a basis for further empirical studies and we have ourselves used in a comprehensive comparative analysis of how risk management approaches shape management attention in quite different ways (to appear in ISR). Practitioners might use the framework to organize and develop company specific risk management approaches and as a conceptual device to stimulate reflection on risk management. The generic questions are, in the form present-

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ed, very general in nature as we have tried to provide a comprehensive understanding of the space addressed in risk management. Other parts of our research on risk management is empirical and other parts (to appear in ISR) contains more elaborate versions of the framework with more specific questions.

While Gro's comments on our paper provide useful suggestions for improvement I believe that we should continue to encourage conceptual and theoretical contributions to SJIS—even in a form which is not directly useful in practice. It is true that empirical, experimental research plays an important role and that we must ultimately present our findings in a form that is useful for practice. But conceptual and theoretical contributions can provide important partial steps to reach such goals.

Whether we should strive in a more systematic way to open SJIS towards the interests of practitioners is still an open question. It is indeed in our interest as researchers to do so and we would all benefit from a more intense dialogue with practice. But SJIS was created as an instrument to improve the quality of Scandinavian research on information systems and we should still be cautious not to pursue too many goals taking our resources into account. In the longer run we should undoubtedly seek to realize Gro's ideas within the IRIS organization and maybe by expanding SJIS as a useful medium for more people.