The ARIS Toolset

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Summary

In 1992, following the results of several research projects, IDS Scheer GmbH began development of a commercial product for modeling and analyzing business processes. Version 1.0 of the ARIS Toolset was presented for the first time at CeBIT 1993. It was the first marketable product to appear in this market segment. The following article describes the technical framework and the different methods and functions of the ARIS Toolset. We will pay particular attention to the general conditions and potential benefits of an ARIS project.

Key Words

1. Early Factors for Success

The original thinking behind the ARIS Toolset dates from a period between 1990 and 1991 at the Institute for Information Systems of the University of the Saarland, under the direction of Prof. Scheer. The first prototypes were also produced at that time. In 1992, following the results of several research projects, IDS Scheer GmbH began development of a commercial product for modeling and analyzing business processes. Version 1.0 of the ARIS Toolset was presented for the first time at CeBIT 1993. It was the first marketable product to appear in this market segment. Since then, the product has been the subject of 10 major releases.

An important factor in the success of the ARIS Toolset has been the theme of Business Process Reengineering, which sparked many corporate initiatives to analyze and redesign business processes during the mid-90s. The reason so many companies were – and still are – willing to invest in projects of this kind lies in the realization that efficient business processes are crucial for the commercial success of the enterprise. A second factor was undoubtedly also SAP AG, which chose the ARIS Toolset as the carrier system for the R/3 reference model. In connection with the R/3 process models, the ARIS Toolset laid the foundation, as it were, for the entire area of process-oriented standardized software implementation, which would later be adopted as an implementation methodology by other producers also.

The term BPR has lost its currency over the course of time, and is now seldom used in public discussion; the modern term is Business Process Management. The profound changes that are presently reshaping the architecture of business applications (Web services, component orientation, collaboration) and the ever closer association of strategy, IT issues and organizational issues have placed the subject of business process management at the very top of companies’ to-do lists.

2. Methods of the ARIS Toolset

The ARIS Toolset stands for a group of systems, the essential feature of which consists in the functions of documenting, analyzing and redesigning business processes. The term business process is intended to embrace not only the control flow, i.e. the chronological sequence of function execution, but also the descriptions of data, organizations and resources that are directly associated therewith.

Business processes are documented using models. In this context, a model is a simplified reflection of reality. The methodological background of ARIS models is provided by the architecture of integrated information systems (ARIS). The ARIS architecture is a conceptual framework developed by Professor A.-W.