

Institution: University of Manchester
Unit of Assessment: 19 (Business and Management Studies)
Title of case study: Salford Process Reengineering Involving New Technology
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research at the University of Manchester, focusing on process systems in advanced architecture for large systems, has enabled the development and successful implementation of the Salford Process Reengineering Involving New Technology (SPRINT) method within Salford City Council. SPRINT is a change and innovation method tailored to the needs of the public sector. Having been adopted as the standard for all Local Authorities in 2004, the SPRINT methodology aided Salford City Council in achieving savings of £20M by 2011. It has been further used in projects in Education and Housing where it has delivered cost savings of £0.5M.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The SPRINT work was initiated through a collaboration between Professor Kawalek and Professor Wastell (University of Salford 2000-2005, University of Nottingham 2005-date). Kawalek is a Computer Scientist whose work on process architectures and languages of abstraction featured in his doctoral studies in the School of Computer Science, University of Manchester, and the later book [1]. Wastell is a psychologist and had interests in methodology and theories of transitional objects. Kawalek has been employed at the University of Manchester as a Research Assistant, Research Associate and Research Fellow from 1990-1998 and then as a Lecturer, Director and Professor 2000-date. A significant contribution to the early research came from Professor Brian Warboys (Computer Science) who was employed as a Professor at the University of Manchester from 1985-2007.</p> <p>Kawalek's research from the late 1990's into Business Information Systems [1] provided the basis for the methodology, using architecture to relate business process models to IT specification. There were two key parts to this (1) a coordination layer in the IT architecture and (2) model abstractions based on user roles. These were combined with Wastell's insights into the methodology and theories behind change processes. The combination of the two led to a collaborative research approach into the development of process methods and techniques across a wide range of industries and sectors [3].</p> <p>After being approached by the director of ICT at Salford City Council Kawalek and Wastell developed the Salford Process Reengineering Involving New Technology (SPRINT) system. SPRINT was designed to enable business process re-engineering to be applied into a public sector environment [4].</p> <p>The problems that had to be addressed in the design of the methods were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change methodology was sold into the public sector by consultancy companies rather than taught and shared by public sector staff themselves. Hence a transferable, self-propagating method was proposed. 2. The development of IT systems was separate to change methodology and represented by another suite of methods (SSADM, Oracle and others), meaning that public sector staff could not develop change projects that were of full-scope leading from cultural and organizational factors all the way through to IT design and specification. Hence a full-scale, integrated method that supported IT design was proposed.

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The first element of this was achieved through the development of a methodology based on systems principles but also integrating ideas gained from the more controversial Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) literature. The key challenge in the development of a solution to this first problem was to design all elements so that they could be assimilated and shared by busy workers, with a much lower level of available time and expertise than consultants. The key challenge in the second problem was to provide useful abstractions that could be interpreted as part of a formal IT development process and shared amongst both IT and general staff at all levels.

Later extensions to the methodology interpret the role of middle-managers as change agents and are the focus of a PhD thesis (Clifford, 2013). These extensions draw on ideas of cosmopolitanism and structuration, and they direct middle and senior managers to take distinctive roles in change processes.

3. References to the research

1. Warboys, B.C., Kawalek, P., Robertson, I., Greenwood, R.M., (1999), Business Information Systems: A Process Approach. McGraw-Hill, London. – Copy available on request
2. Kawalek, P., The Bubble Strategy: A Case Study of Dynamic, Defensible Processes of Change in Salford, (2007) International Journal of Public Sector Management, DOI: 10.1108/09513550710740599
3. Wastell, D.G., McMaster, T., Kawalek, P., (2007) The Rise of the Phoenix: Methodological Innovation as a Discourse of Renewal, special issue of Journal of Information Technology, Vol. 22, pp. 59 – 68 DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.jit.2000086
4. Kawalek, P., Wastell, D., (2005) Pursuing Radical Transformation in Information Age Government: Case Studies Using the SPRINT Methodology, Journal of Global Information Management, 13(1), 80-102, January-March 2005. DOI: 10.4018/jgim.2005010104

[2,3,4] are all published as peer reviewed international journal articles. [1] is published as a book with an international publisher and has 113 Google Scholar citations.

4. Details of the impact**Context**

Before the SPRINT methodology, local authorities would run change projects using consultants, specialised IT methods. The problems with these methods were that they were expensive, they focused on technology development rather than organizational change, and they reduced the role of regular staff in the change process.

Pathways to Impact

In 2000 the Director for ICT at Salford City Council approached Kawalek and Wastell to design a methodology for change and innovation based on their research insights that would foster engagement in change projects. This led to the creation of SPRINT. The methodology was tested and quickly adopted by Salford City Council and utilised in projects in Housing, Revenues, Customer Services and other areas. These led to awards including Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Scores of 4* (the highest) and Local Government Association “Best of the Best” local government services award (for Customer Services Revenues and Benefits). The Strategic Director of Customer and Support Services at Salford City Council comments [A]: “*There was nothing in the marketplace that met the needs of the council. It was necessary to develop a method that allowed a high degree of participation amongst council staff so that IT projects could be managed by business users and IT staff alike. Hence, SPRINT was developed and allowed*

process models to be built and other kinds of creative engagement to take place. The IT function in Salford City Council valued it because of its user-friendliness but also because it allowed them to develop formal IT requirements. This was seen as a unique offering.”

In 2004 the SPRINT approach was adopted as the standard for the whole local government sector by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. In an effort to ensure that the programme was universally applied, the SPRINT user group was formed at that time, consisting to date of over 100 UK councils and other public sector bodies.

Reach and Significance

Having invested £230,000 to date in the development of the SPRINT programme (including the training of 240 staff in change and transformation programmes) Salford City Council was able to achieve the £20 million pounds savings required of it from 2005/6 to 2011, following the Gershon report. SPRINT was the key change initiative deployed to this end and focused on staff engagement in the change process, and was considered vital to maintaining service quality. A Senior Business Consultant [B] confirms *“Salford City Council’s requirement to save in excess of £20m during 2011 was delivered as part of “Think Efficiency” a SPRINT programme designed as a response to the Gershon report”*. The savings are achieved by process change identified by the user community, plus automation achieved through the translation of process diagrams into system functionality.

After the major success of SPRINT in the delivery of the council’s transformation programme, SPRINT continues to be used today. The Strategic Director of Customer and Support Services, confirms [A] that it remains a key methodology in the council and is deployed in current change projects in education and housing areas: *“There have been a number of high-profile deployments of the SPRINT method in areas including Social Services, Housing and Education. These projects continue to this date and a realistic estimate of the value of savings achieved across the portfolio is £0.5M”*

Later, starting in 2009, Salford City Council commissioned developments of the SPRINT method in the form of Figure of Eight methodology and Transform Trios. These were developed by Clifford of Manchester Business School and Kawalek, and will be published in Clifford’s PhD thesis (expected 2013). They retained the philosophical position established by the earlier work. Distinctive new contributions are (1) a dynamic new model expressing the role of senior and middle managers in change programmes and (2) innovation cell methodology based on active trios. Two hundred and forty staff in Salford have been trained in these aspects. The Strategic Director at Salford City Council [A] has written to report that these developments have saved the council a further £500,000: *“There have been a number of other high-profile deployments of the SPRINT method in areas including Social Services, Housing and Education. These projects continue to this date and a realistic estimate of the value of savings achieved across the portfolio is £0.5m. Overall, the value of SPRINT to Salford Council has been gained in terms of operational savings, increased know-how and capacity, government awards and reputation. On the latter, it was good for the council to spend a number of years facilitating the national SPRINT user-group.”*

The SPRINT methodology has been used to deliver key projects in other councils. An example of this is at Oldham MBC where from 2010 onwards, SPRINT has been utilised in a Value for Money (VfM) programme alongside other related change programmes. The former Director of Customer and Business Change at Oldham MBC writes [C]: *“SPRINT was used to enable delivery of the*

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Value for Money (VfM) Programme and in related change programmes..... SPRINT is a cleverly designed method, able to bridge between user experiences and IT architectures. At its core it is a key tool for engagement of staff, managers and customers in transforming services.” The VfM strategy at Oldham MBC developed with SPRINT at its core achieved budget savings of £40M. In separate programmes SPRINT was also used to develop business and transformational change in key areas of the council such as; Highways, Children’s Services, Building Services, HR and Finance.

An iteration of SPRINT utilising improved metrics but retaining the core principles of the methodology called Innov8 was developed at Leeds City Council. The method became the council’s adopted approach to business change and was utilised in a variety of projects. It was used across a range of service reorganisations delivering financial savings and improved performance [D].

The SPRINT user group gained membership of 100 agencies [E], the majority of which were other local councils. In addition over 1500 Council staff across the country have been accredited as SPRINT Practitioners.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

All sources are cross-referenced in section 4.

- A. Letter from Strategic Director, Customer and Support Services, Salford City Council
- B. Letter from Senior Business Consultant at Salford City Council
- C. Letter from former Director of Customer and Business Change Oldham MBC
- D. Letter from former BPR Manager at Leeds and North Lincolnshire Councils and Chair of SPRINT User Group
- E. SPRINT Website page outlining the SPRINT User Group
<http://www.managingbydesign.net/SPRINT/pages0b30.html?id=2>