

Abstract

Workflows are process-based applications, employed to support structured tasks and explicitly defined business processes. This work deals with irregularly recurring processes in an office work context, involving several persons and following defined rules. While the technical implementation of workflows and the definition of the processes have always been well attended, the user perspective has so far been neglected.

The workflow user decides with every entry field over necessity and content of his entry. With this entry the further course of the process is automatically determined according to fixed rules. The user therefore indispensably needs knowledge about the process and relations. Today, no suitable support exists, that facilitates the work use and appropriately refers to its process relation. The purpose of this work is the development of a process-oriented user support, consisting of user guidance and help system, which offers the user optimal support and enables him to enhanced performance. A relevant approach is Process Awareness (PA). PA includes the perception of the process situation, comprehension of the situation and their relations as well as the projection to the further process course. A PA-model is presented that postulates relations to other factors like previous knowledge and performance. From this model emerges the assumption that a change in PA directly affects the performance.

A requirements engineering study is conducted to determine the requirements to the user support content, resulting in a taxonomy of help information for workflows. Based on this a concept for a process-oriented user support is developed, offering interaction knowledge and factual knowledge, especially process knowledge. The concept is implemented as a prototype and evaluated.

The results proof the comprehensiveness of the taxonomy and the aptitude of the concept for process-oriented user support. The Pa and performance in the evaluation study were significantly better than those of the control group. The PA-model is partly verified.