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**COMP 361 - Categories of Information Systems**

According to several online sources, there are 5 general categories of information systems [1][2]. These categories are: office information systems (OIS), transaction processing systems (TPS), management information systems (MIS), decision support systems (DSS), and expert systems. These classifications do not appear among the many systems listed in the textbook[3]. However, most of the systems seem to fit under the broader categories mentioned online. It seems strange that the textbook would not mention these.

OIS are generally systems that automate business tasks[2]. This includes activities and software such as word processing, spreadsheets, and email[1]. OIS allow employees to get their work done in a more efficient manner. This category of system would seem to include the knowledge management system and collaboration support systems mentioned in the textbook[3].

TPS are systems are obviously systems that deal with data related to transactions such as deposits, payments, and orders[1]. This area is covered by the accounting and financial management system and the customer relationship management system in the textbook[3]. However, the textbook mentions even more detail about marketing to customers and managing more accounting tasks than what is implied in TPS.

MIS take the data from TPS, and aggregate or summarize it for managers to view in reports[2]. These reports and data can then be used by managers to direct projects or personnel, and make decisions about the resources of the company. From the textbook, it would seem that the supply chain management system, the manufacturing management system, and possibly even the human resource management system[3]. The type of information generated by these specific systems would seem to feed into an MIS quite well, even though specific mention of this type of detail is not made in [1] or [2].

DSS gathers information form internal and external sources to help make decisions[1]. This category seems quite vague, and it seems that it would be tailored to a specific business because decisions made in different business sectors are obviously quite different. The business intelligence system mentioned in the textbook best fits this category[3]. They both involve strategic planning for businesses.

Expert systems are very different from the previously mentioned categories. They are also used in making decisions, but use data from experts in the field, and a form of artificial intelligence to make the decisions, instead of presenting raw data or reports as MIS or DSS do. This type of system is not mentioned in the textbook. However, the enterprise resource planning system mentioned in the textbook is unlike anything mentioned in [1] or [2]. This type of system incorporates all the others into a package for business to use as an integrated set, instead of trying to develop several independent systems[3].

Overall, there are similarities mentioned between the online sources and the textbook. However, the textbook seems to be much more exhaustive in its approach to different types of systems and what they can do for a company. With so many names, acronyms, activities and functions available in the realm of information systems, it is a wonder that people can keep them all straight!

**References**

[1] Shelly, Cashman and Vermaat, "Types of Information Systems," *Discovering Computers 2000 – Concepts for a Connected World,* accessed December 6, 2013, <http://bisom.uncc.edu/courses/info2130/Topics/istypes.htm>.

[2] Jeffrey A. Hoffer, Joey F. George, Joeseph S. Valacich, "Supplement 2: Types of Information Systems," *Modern Systems Analysis and Design - Second Edition,* accessed December 6, 2013, <http://www.prenhall.com/divisions/bp/app/hoffer/student/supp2.html>.

[3] J. W. Satzinger, R. B. Jackson and S. D. Burd, Systems Analysis and Design in a Changing World, 5th ed. Boston, USA: Thomson Course Technology, 2009.