

Chapter 3

SYSTEM DESIGN

3.1 Description

Systems Design is the process of defining the architecture, modules, interfaces, and data for a system to satisfy specified requirements. Systems design could be seen as the application of systems theory to project development.

Systems design implies a systematic approach to the design of a system. It may take a bottom-up or top-down approach, but either way the process is systematic wherein it takes into account all related variables of the system that needs to be created—from the architecture, to the required hardware and software, right down to the data and how it travels and transforms throughout its travel through the system.

Put another way, the portion of system design can generally be broken down into three sub-tasks:

1. User Interface Design
2. Data Design
3. Process Design

User Interface Design is concerned with how users add information to the system and with how the system presents information back to them. Data Design is concerned with how the data is represented and stored within the system. Finally, Process Design is concerned with how data moves through the system, and with how and where it is validated, secured and/or transformed as it flows into, through and out of the system.

Physical design, in this context, does not refer to the tangible physical design of an information system. To use an analogy, a personal computer's physical design involves input via a keyboard, processing within the CPU, and output via a monitor, printer, etc. It would not concern the actual layout of the tangible hardware, which for a PC would be a monitor, CPU,

Mother board, hard drive, etc. It involves a detailed design of a user and a project database structure processor and a control processor.