ABSTRACT

Students receive education on a wide variety of topics while attending college. However, it may be the case that students do not receive hands-on experience with industry tools or applications that are being used in the workplace. Through the SAP University Alliance, university professors are able to access a variety of SAP ERP tools and software that come with pre-made curriculum for classroom use. The use of this curriculum, alongside the hosted software, would allow students to receive hands-on experience with SAP products that are widely used throughout several industries. This project explored the curriculum provided with two products to gauge the usefulness and completeness of the exercises with a goal of judging the feasibility of use in the classroom.

WHAT IS AN ERP?

ERP stands for "Enterprise Recourse Planning". It’s a type of software that acts as the heart of any IT environment, managing the input and output of goods through an organization. Most ERP developers also create additional plugins called modules that provide necessary IT infrastructure to support additional industries (ex. Healthcare, HR, Accounting, etc.).

WHAT IS SAP?

SAP is the largest ERP provider in the world and one of the five largest software companies globally. SAP provides a large variety of ERP products as well as a library of additional modules suited for different industries. Companies that use SAP as their ERP of choice include Ford, Apple, Walmart, and many more.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE?

The University Alliance is a partnership between SAP and universities around the world. The University Alliance allows faculty and staff of universities access to SAP resources and events. Some of what SAP provides is pre-configured classroom teaching systems and software, pre-made curriculums associated with their software, support through University Competency Centers and Academic Competence Centers, and invitations to events for expanding SAP knowledge, relationship building, and connecting with industry partners.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The prevalence of SAP makes it important that students are exposed to SAP technology, products, and tools that may be used during employment. With a wide range of modules offered and extensive hands on training included, experience with some modules could lessen the learning curve when beginning a job. Additionally, with this added expertise, students will be better equipped to compete with other universities offering this training and will have an advantage over those that don’t.

MODULES AND CURRICULUM

Accompanying the hosted SAP software are pre-made curriculums that are separated into modules. Each module has a PowerPoint and Word document that explains the module and the ERP functionality, as well as instructions that walk you through the steps you will need to take to complete the task. These modules are structured for classroom learning and hands-on experience with SAP software. This project sampled two different curriculums that were geared towards IT configuration and general business use. Some of these modules included the configuration of an ERP system for Sales and Distribution, Materials Management, Vendor Records, and more. As for general business use, modules were completed that explained and showed how to use Accounting, Purchasing, Pricing, Forecasting, and other ERP modules that are used in most business settings.

WHAT DID WE DO?

To determine the viability of the curriculum the University Alliance offers, we sampled several different products over the course of our senior year. The sampled curriculum included modules relating to the configuration of an SAP system and to the overview of a typical SAP environment, both of which we found to be relevant to IST academics.

TAKEAWAY

Based on the work done for this project, we believe that it is feasible for the campus or university as a whole to implement the SAP curriculum into the PSU curriculum. The pre-made SAP curriculums can be fit into existing class curriculums as supplemental work to enhance the student experience. This hands-on experience with SAP software can give students valuable knowledge and skills that they otherwise would not have. Further exploration of hosted SAP software and curriculum is being completed by upcoming seniors, which will analyze the next generation SAP ERP platform. This work can then provide additional insight into the viability of the newer software and the quality of its associated curriculums.

REFERENCES

- Reference Image within SAP R/3 ERP System retrieved from SAP R/3 hosted session.