In Brief

ECOMMERCE
Portal power

Ly-Fie Sugianto and *Dewi Rooslani Tojib* propose a scale to measure the success of your business-to-employee portal

A business to employee (b2e) portal consolidates and personalises computerised information around the needs of the user, its target audience, deployment purpose, scope, technology and functionality. It supports access and availability of customised and personalised employee information via the internet using mobile devises such as desktops, notebooks and Personal Digital Assistants. And it is a rapidly growing market with Merrill Lynch Capital Markets predicting portals will mushroom

modern corporation also needs a b2e portal to maintain connections and a sense of community. Employees need to be able to perform work-related and personal-related tasks anytime, anywhere, while remaining connected to the organisation and colleagues.

MEASURING USER SATISFACTION
Portal installation is not cheap, so it's understandable that corporate bean counters will want some sort of measure for its success. Return on investment (ROI) is a common approach, but this is not always practical. So we have developed an alternative; derived from the concept of user satisfaction, the most widely adopted, if not most common measure of success.

A combination of literature review on user satisfaction and b2e portal studies determined nine dimensions of the b2e Portal User Satisfaction (b2ePUS) construct: ease of use, layout, convenience of access, information content, communication, timeliness, efficiency, confidentiality and security. In the exploratory study, the data was subjected

Evolution of the b2ePUS dimensions

Initial concept model	Revised concept model	Empirical model
Security	Security	
Confidentiality		Confidentiality
Information content	Information content	
Timeliness		
Layout	Ease of use	Ease of use
Ease of use		Portal design
Efficiency	Efficiency	Usefulness
Communication	Communication	
Convenience of access	Convenience of access	Convenience of access

into a US$14 billion business. However, with some costing up to US$5 million and issues such as systems compatibility, preference for human contact and data confidentiality and privacy issues to deal with, the b2e portal has inherent challenges as well as advantages.

Essentially the b2e portal gives employees convenient online access to traditionally paper-based documents like company calendar listing, holidays, pay days, employee policies, job listings, personal contact information, leave balances, health care and retirement plans, career planning and online training. This access eliminates up to 80 per cent of all paperwork and dramatically reduces HR's work load so it can focus on achieving strategic goals like reducing turnover and developing skill inventories.

With telecommuting, teleworking and other novel office arrangements scattering the workforce, a

to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The iterative procedures of factor analysis resulted in a final scale of 22 items belonging to five distinct dimensions associated with the b2ePUS construct: confidentiality, ease of use, portal design, usefulness and convenience of access. Furthermore, to test the factor structure more rigorously we performed a confirmatory study resulting in a final 18 items with the five dimensions previously identified sufficiently capturing the b2ePUS construct. The figure above shows the evolution of the b2ePUS dimensions.

Dr Ly-Fie Sugianto is Senior Lecturer at the Clayton School of IT, Monash University and Dewi Rooslani Tojib is a PhD candidate there.