

# Using IT the Right Way

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As the computer has evolved from being simply a number cruncher to (in many cases) "assuming its master's profession," it's not enough just to automate; to get the greatest benefits of the computer and its power, organizations need to think about "how" they apply IT.

The Industrial Revolution changed a peasant society into that of producer and consumer. With these roles in place, the challenges between technology and survival are now tackled with the computer. However, the computer has to be programmed or instructed in a highly logical manner by a human. The growth of its ability can be compared to atomic power, where there is a chance that its abilities will be misused in some way.

As many organizations opt for computerization, the benefits of increased efficiency and productivity seem attractive. But before going this route, the organization should keep in mind that technology is only a "tool" and not a "technique" for getting the job done. Users have tried to translate structures for solving problems to the computer, but this is the main cause of computer misuse. When something doesn't go the way it should, the machine can't be blamed - it's the fault of the people who are responsible for making the transition.

By studying the entire system (as opposed to analyzing individual subcomponents), the organization will understand its own structure and the limitations of technology. Finding the loopholes, redundant policies, and even questioning the hierarchical setup will also provide a way for getting from the current position to the desired state.

Examining the organization in this way is a formidable process, but if it does not happen, too much automation of the complex systems and alienation from the actual problem environment may block the users' untapped skills. IT should be used to improve man's functional effectiveness and not as a solution to society's problems - the latter being an attitude that fosters "analytical lethargy."

- Motamarri Saradhi, Singapore