Business Process Mapping

Introduction

Business process mapping is the practice of scoping, understanding, and assessing business processes for potential improvement. It supports a process-oriented approach to a business domain, identifying "end-to-end" business processes that cross existing organizational boundaries. Business process mapping leads to recommendations as part of a business case that can include improvements in process workflow, information technology, policy, and human resources.

Business process mapping is intended to be cross-functional and highly participatory, so that all business units involved gain a shared understanding of key business processes and can work together to improve them. The method is both top-down and bottom-up, and supports more detailed analysis such as as-is workflow modeling, proposing a to-be process, and defining functional requirements for a solution.

Since 2014, the Enterprise Architecture program has offered training in a business process mapping method taught by Alec Sharp of Clariteq Systems Consulting. As UW projects apply this method it is being adapted to UW needs, resulting in the materials featured on this page.

Method Overview

Typical phases of business process mapping include:

- Phase I: Establish process context, scope and goals
- Phase II: Understand the as-is process workflow
- Phase III: Design the to-be process

Phase I should begin early in an initiative, because the context it provides can significantly change the proposed scope of one or more implementation projects. This phase of business process mapping can be part of a "scoping study", conducted as a project to define future projects. Resources needed in this phase typically include one or more business analysts, subject matter experts, and a workshop facilitator.

Phases II and III can become part of the requirements phase of an implementation project that can (but does not necessarily) include information technology changes; these phases support business analysis and solution design.

As of Summer 2015, several UW projects have applied Phase I, which is summarized below:

Business Process Mapping > Phase I
Process Context, Scope, and Goals

Planning  Discovery  Mapping  Workshop  Process  Assessment  Case for Action

- Identify sponsors, organizations, and subject matter experts (SMEs) across organizations
- Conduct sponsor interviews
- Conduct SME interviews
- Gather activities and tasks
- Identify workshop participants across organizations
- ... and more...

This phase is often followed by:
- A project charter to pursue recommended improvements in a process area
- Further as-is process workflow modeling, data modeling, and content analysis
- To be process workflow modeling, data modeling, and requirements development
- Technology solution design, prototyping, testing, and implementation

The Business Process Mapping Overview slides provide a summary of all three phases.

Process maps are a key deliverable of Phase I, usually including an overall process landscape and individual process summaries. For examples produced by UW projects, see:

- Process Maps