Planning and Implementation of Effective Collaboration in Construction Projects

Shelbourn, M, Dr.; Bouchlaghem, N.M, Professor; Anumba, C, Professor; Carrillo, P, Professor
Civil & Building Engineering, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. +44 (0) 1509 228745. m.a.shelbourn@lboro.ac.uk

Abstract

The 21st century is now seen as the time for the construction industry to embrace new ways of working if it is to continue to be competitive and meet the needs of its ever demanding clients. Collaborative working is considered by many to be essential if design and construction teams are to consider the whole lifecycle of the construction product.

Much of the recent work on collaborative working has focused on the delivery of technological solutions with a focus on web (extranets), CAD (visualisation), and knowledge management technologies. However, it is now recognised that good collaboration does not result from the implementation of information technology solutions alone. The organisational and people issues, which are not readily solved by pure technical systems, need to be resolved. However, approaches that exclusively focus on organisational and people issues will not reap the benefits derived from the use of technology, especially in the context of distributed teams which are the norm in construction.

Work currently being undertaken at Loughborough University aims to bring together the benefits enabled by the technology, with the organisational, and its people issues to provide a framework enabling high level strategic decisions to be made to implement effective collaboration. This paper reports on the initial stages of the project: the background to the project, the methodology used, and findings from the literature survey and the requirements capture survey conducted as part of the project.

Keywords: Collaborative working, methodology, needs and requirements capture, decision-making framework