

INFORMATIONAL SOCIETY - ITS IMPLICATIONS REGARDING THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION

Lecturer PhD. Anca Bratu, University of Bucharest
Lecturer Aura Bărică, Technical University of Civil
Engineering, Bucharest

The literature of the information technology field proves the fact that topic such as: the intelligent company, the virtual company, the Internet expansion, the e-commerce, the e-banking, e- and the society global information are directions which mankind can not avoid. Considering these situations, willing or not, the companies should modernize. Meanwhile, the experts from the accounting field should understand it, at least partially, by means of these developments; on the contrary, their opinions will be truncated and easily influenced.*

We can not hide that in this field a series of new technologies will appear, and these technological movements will seriously influence both at a practical and theoretical level the finance-banking field. All these changes will trigger a series of challenges for the accounting profession.

A new direction in the accountancy field will be developed?

At this moment, new efforts are made for the synchronizing the Romanian accountancy system with the International Accountancy Standards, by preparing new specialists in the field, forming of financial/accounting body of authors, continuous forming of accounting professionals and evaluation of the quality of their services. All these efforts are made without considering the new realizations in the field of the information technologies, communications or the environment they will work in the near future.

We consider that the accountancy profession in Romania should notice the new direction of other professionals from other countries.

Considering the information technologies developments, the company, the basis of the value chain, should develop its activity in order to achieve its goals and to obtain a profit. Such a company should be a modern company.

At the present moment, there are plenty of factors that set an excited behavior to the company for the economical survival. Among these factors, the most important are: information technologies, political changes, clients mentality changes, interests of different professional organisms and trade-unions, international terrorism, etc.

In this factorial and informational labyrinth, the company is obliged to modernize. Moreover, on the basis of these modern ideas, new companies, which could not have existed some decades ago, are created. It is the case of the companies that provide the Internet, which are today the support of new modern companies: from advertising companies to electronic commerce companies, from personal business - to outsourcing services for big companies.

The characteristics of the modern companies

If the existent companies accept to survive in this global informational environment, it is important to know which characteristics are needed for an efficient modernization process. The attentive studying of many companies and considering the global informational society, we reach the following set of characteristics for the future company: standardization, digitization and artificial intelligence.

Lately, the information has been taking into consideration more seriously, because by means of informatics equipment, its **reproductive** character has been emphasized.

In order to process and manipulate these data and information, besides the use of the informatics equipment, we also need other informatics resources, such as the trained staff and the specialized soft. In order to put into practice these theories, we also need a combining mode of these informatics resources, which is a working technology that we should apply in any technological process. Thus, we get to a technology based on informatics or, simply to an informational technology.

Regarding the communication, we can easily notice that, however informed a person should be, this person becomes appreciated by the others (and paid accordingly) if he/she succeeds to send the information to the other participants. In other words, that person information can be made valuable only if it is communicated to the others by different means.

These are the main informational technologies that lead the companies to modernism and the society to globalization

- a. The Internet, with all its applications: Intranet, Extranet, group ware (co-working), EFJ (Electronic Found Transfer), EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) internet, e-banking, mail, e-learning, discussions on the Internet (forums, meeting groups, news groups), hat, e-commerce having the following business models: e-shop, e-procurement, e-auction, e-mall, Third Party Market place, Virtual Communities etc, connections at a distance, telephony, video-conferences, virtual universes, catching the radio-tv programmes, etc;
- b. Optical Character Recognition
- c. Automat Teller machine –ATM;
- d. Electronical systems of realizing the meetings;
- e. Electronical administration of documents and work in groupware;
- f. Artificial intelligence and its application (intelligent systems, phenomena recognition, speaking recognition and understanding, robotics, general problem solvers, assisted learning and natural language processing;
- g. Multimedia systems;
- h. Other informational technologies. We include here all the modern technologies assisted design, digital signature, calm and invisible technology, tele-presence at the working place, Web computers, Microsystems etc.

New methods of working and specific activities for informational societies

Informational technologies and communications will have a major impact on the company because of the movements that will interfere by means of the new methods of working and by means of the activities that these could generate. Among the new methods of working, we can mention: tele - commuting, virtual office and tele - working.

They already speak about the modern knowledge and modern intelligence, but the movements within the modern company should be noticed for the passing to an international global society.

Firstly, all the activities undertaken within the company should be registered as digital information. This digital registration is only one aspect of the globally computerized society. The passing to understanding and knowledge about/through fluxes should be done from this computerization of fluxes that takes place within the company.

Secondly, the employees of the modern company will be the so-called synthetic workers that are robots having a human appearance. Under these circumstances, the modern company should redesign the processes in order to avoid the conflict of interests among its workers. In other words, the company redesigning processes will never end.

Thirdly, the modern company from the computerized society should work out other proceedings for the evaluation of its results. The notion of profit will be larger than the

present one, because it will contain other elements which are difficult to eliminate at this moment. Thus, a good example is **the growing of the workers understanding in a financial exercise**, in this sense, an expansion of the fixed assets of the modern company by means of its human resources registration is anticipated.

Some challenges for the accounting profession in Romania

The “tomorrow” company will unfold the activity in a global computerized environment, will be more “intelligent” and more and more virtual. In other words, this should adapt to the cyberspace dominated by the Internet, by the artificial intelligence and by informatics technologies still unknown. The future professional accountant should carry on its activity in such a modern company. He should give up some traditional instruments such as the paper and the ball-point pen and accept the future.

The working coordinates in the professional accountant activity field are the following ones:

1. The digital economy;
2. The virtuality of the phenomena and processes from the company;
3. The entire computerization of the companies;
4. The new informational technologies and communication appearance;
5. The new methods of working and the activities specific for the informational societies;
6. The integration of new functions within a company;
7. The standardization of working proceedings in companies;
8. Working in real time;
9. The process of making decisions- based more and more on the scripts technique;
10. The expansion of some accounting principles as a result of the virtualization and computerization, in a digital economy.

At the beginning of the 21st century, starting from all these guiding lines, the accountancy profession from Romania and not only, will be forced to face the following challenges which regard the field of the accountancy.

1. The continuous preparation of the accountant. The accountant should know all the news in the fields that influence his activity. From around 2-3 years, the held information becomes perishable and risky for the accounting profession. Thus, the accounting profession should accept the challenges imposed by the new technologies. We refer here to the setting of a standard regarding the expansion of the computerized accounting technique, unanimously accepted. The professional accountant should be able to visualize, to interrogate and to print the information in the data basis. The (partial) elimination of the paper in favour of the magnetic supports, the use on a large scale of the specialized sensors in different working environments (for the management accounting), the elimination of the ball-point pen in favour of the e-Pen, the use of computer vocal command, on-line and just-in-time registrations etc. will lead to a very efficient accountancy and a financial analysis in “real time”, having the possibility of expressing in different monetary currency.

2. The activity developing in a digital economy and a virtual company firmly interconnected. The integration and computerization of the companies’ activities impose the expansion and acceptance of the computerized accounting method, the working in real time, the acceptance of some virtual processes and of some new patrimonial elements (for instance, the intellectual capital).

3. The changing of the load center from the microeconomic level to the macroeconomic level. Considering the company functions integration, at the same time with the use on a large scale of the ERP products and phenomena computerization from the

microeconomic level, it is possible that at a certain moment the concept of national accountancy becomes ubiquitous, while the company accountancy constitutes a simple working model.

4. The development of an accountancy centered on events, not only on economic facts. The accounting profession should accept the idea of registering a simple economic event with all its aspects, to the detriment of the accounting treatment applied partially to a simple economic event/phenomenon. This challenge is the effect of computerizing and processing of the accounting data.

5. Special realizations in the field of artificial intelligence, among which we can mention robotics and intelligent agents, can lead to the (partial) replacement of the professional accountant in every day works. Under these circumstances the International Standards of Accountancy for new informational technologies and an expansion of the accounting working concepts should be adopted. The professional accountant should be focused on the instruments of the artificial intelligence, which can be used in its field. Thus, if we take into consideration the possibilities of artificial intelligence in the field of vague systems, of neuronal systems, of recognizing the forms, of recognizing and understanding the speaking, adding the desire of the specialists and equipment designers to reach the capacities of the human brain processing, we can anticipate the realization of an “intelligent accountant robot”. We can ask ourselves the question that derives from this challenge: **How does the accountancy profession regards this competing system?**

6. **The accounting understanding should enrich continuously.** In this way, the accounting profession should find solutions for the following problems: the expansion of the resulting concept at the same time with the setting of new proceedings for its evaluation, the assimilation of some new patrimonial elements that result from the adaptation to the new informational technologies, including some accounting concepts corresponding to the working in virtual environments, etc.

Considering all these challenges, the question “Is the accounting system in Romania at a turning point at this moment?” has an affirmative answer.

Bibliography:

1. Kaplan, R.S., Johnson, H.T., *Relevance Lost. The Rise and Fall of Management Accounting*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 1987

2. Maloe, T., Smith, S., *Tradeoffs in designing organization: implication for new forms of human organizations and computer systems*, Centers for Information Systems Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technologies, 1984.

3. Țugui, AL, *Produse informatice generalizate pentru contabilitate*, Editura CECCAR, București, 2003.

4. Țugui, AL, *Necesitatea utilizării tehnologiilor informaționale în activitățile profesioniștilor contabili din România*, volumul *Congresul al XII-lea al profesiei contabile din România*, București, septembrie 2002.

5. Țugui, AL, Țugui, I., *Profesioniștii contabili nu pot rămâne indiferenți la evoluțiile din domeniul tehnologiilor informaționale*, revista *Contabilitatea, expertiza și auditul afacerilor*, nr. 4/2002.

6. <http://www.intelligententerprise.com>