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**On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented
Business and Information Systems Engineering – Supplemental
Considerations and further Application Examples**

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Publications of the Institute for Information Systems
at the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI)

Editor: Prof. Dr. Peter Loos



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On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented Business and Information Systems Engineering - Supplemental Considerations and further Application Examples¹

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Abstract

This contribution represents a supplement to the article „On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented Business and Information Systems Engineering – Conceptual Foundations, Application Example, and Implications” in the special issue on Science of Business and Information Systems Engineering of the Journal Business and Information Systems Engineering (BISE) in 2010. It contains further application examples concerning the introduced reference framework for systemizing design knowledge. Besides the comprehensive documentation of design knowledge concerning event-driven process chains (EPC) with the dedicated literary sources and an evaluation of the evidence of the provided statements, in this report the framework is furthermore applied for the documentation of design knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach, another technique for process design presented by Lee et al. in MIS Quarterly in 2008. Subsequently the results are discussed.

Keywords: Design Knowledge, Design Science, Design-Oriented Research, Event-driven Process Chains (EPC), Process Grammar Approach

Content

Content	i
List of Abbreviations	ii
Tabels	iii
1 Introduction	1
2 Framework for the Documentation of Design Knowledge	2
3 Design Knowledge about Event-driven Process Chains	5
4 Design Knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach	10
4.1 Overview	10
4.2 Discussion.....	13
5 Summary.....	16
References	17

List of Abbreviations

ARIS	Architecture of Integrated Information Systems
BISE	Business and Information Systems Engineering
BPMN	Business Process Modeling Notation
C _x	Criterion x
EPC	Event-Driven Process Chain
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ET	Decision table (in German: <u>E</u> ntscheidung <u>t</u> abelle)
I.	Issue
MIS	Management Information Systems
modEPC	Modified EPC
oEPC	Object-oriented EPC
p.	page
pp.	pages
PR	Process Recombinator
rEPC	Real-Time-Extension of the EPC
sEPC	1. semantic representation of EPC (<i>Thomas et al. 2006</i>) 2. service-oriented EPC (<i>Huth et al. 2008</i>)
T _x	Technique x
UML	Unified Modeling Language
Vol.	Volume
xEPK	Agent-oriented EPC
XML	Extensible Markup Language
YAWL	Yet Another Workflow Language
yEPC	Yet Another EPC
zEPK	Collaboration-oriented EPC (in German: <u>z</u> usammenarbeitsorientierte EPK)

Tables

Table 1: Framework for the Documentation of Design Knowledge	3
Table 2: Design Knowledge about Event-driven Process Chains	10
Table 3: Design Knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach	13

1 Introduction

In the article „On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented Business and Information Systems Engineering – Conceptual Foundations, Application Example, and Implications” in Business and Information System Engineering (BISE) it is argued that design knowledge plays an important role in the context of the construction and design of information systems.² Design knowledge can be understood as knowledge about relevant design goals, knowledge about techniques which can be used for specific tasks in the context of designing information systems as well as knowledge about the effects of the use of a particular technique. It is furthermore argued that this knowledge can be produced, evaluated and used considering scientific standards in order to produce, evaluate and use *scientific* design knowledge. The above mentioned contribution presents necessary conceptual foundations and explains the relevance of design knowledge in design-oriented research in Business and Information Systems Engineering based on an introduced model of system design, the delimitation and typification of design knowledge and some explanations and remarks on the importance of design knowledge during the process of designing information systems. Based on this argumentation the contribution presents a framework for systemizing and documenting scientific design knowledge as well as an approach for evaluating the evidence of documented statements representing design knowledge. In the mentioned article this framework is exemplarily used to present, explain and discuss scientific design knowledge about the business process modeling technique of Event-driven Process Chains (EPC). Due to space limitations only a shortened version of the compendium of extracted design knowledge could be presented in the journal article.

This contribution serves as a supplement for the mentioned article. It provides further information on the application example and a comprehensive table with the documented design knowledge about Event-driven Process Chains. The dedicated references in literature supporting the statements on characteristics of a technique, like effects, repeatability, impersonality, relevance, side effects etc. are also provided. Furthermore this contribution presents an additional application example which could also not be in-

² Fettke, P., Houy, C., and Loos, P. (2010): On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented Business and Information Systems Engineering - Conceptual Foundations, Application Example, and Implications; Business Information Systems Engineering (BISE), Vol. 2. 2010, I. 6; pp. 347-358.

cluded in the journal article due to space limitations. The framework is used for systemizing and documenting design knowledge about the “Process Grammar Approach”, a process design technique which has been presented by Lee et al. in issue 4 of *MIS Quarterly* in 2008.³ The design knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach and its relevance for information systems design are moreover discussed in this report.

The remainder of this contribution is as follows: at first the framework for the documentation of design knowledge is illustrated. Thereafter the complete tables containing the documented design knowledge about EPC and the Process Grammar Approach are presented. The design knowledge about the latter technique is then discussed in more detail. A summary closes the report.

2 Framework for the Documentation of Design Knowledge

In the following the framework for systemizing design knowledge which has been introduced in the underlying article will be shortly presented. Basically the framework which is visualized in table 1 on the next page consists of three sections. The first section includes the context and a brief description of a technique as well as the superior design goal of the technique. The second section provides a detailed characterization of the technique. In this context it is particularly explained how a technique fulfils minimum and comparative requirements. Minimum requirements in this context represent requirements which at least have to be fulfilled in order to be able to talk about a technique at all (effect, repeatability and impersonality). They represent more or less analytic consequences of the concept of a technique as something that reliably functions as a means to achieve a goal. Comparative requirements allow a system designer to assess several techniques in relation to each other (e.g. relevance, side effects, degree of maturity, costs etc.). Thus, knowledge about comparative requirements is relevant for choosing an adequate one if several techniques are available. In addition, the framework comprises a third section including variants of the technique and alternative techniques.

³ Lee, J., Wyner, G.M., and Pentland, B.T. (2008): Process Grammar as a Tool for Business Process Design; *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 32. 2008, I. 4; pp. 757-778.

Design Knowledge about a technique			
Context and short description of the technique			
Superior design goal			
Characteristics of the technique	Minimum requirements for the technique	Effect	Evidence
		Repeatability	
		Impersonality	
	Comparative requirements for the technique	Relevance	
		Application domain	
		Side effects	
		Degree of maturity	
		Degree of routine	
		Costs	
		Efficiency	
Variants of the technique			
Alternative techniques			

Table 1: Framework for the Documentation of Design Knowledge⁴

The framework moreover allows for the assessment of the evidence of single statements on the characteristics of a technique. “Basically, we can assume that design knowledge is awarded different degrees of credibility. Ideally, a design knowledge statement can have a maximum of evidence: The statement is proven true and has to be accepted in all circumstances. At the other extreme, the truth value of the statement is unknown, but the statement has a certain plausibility. For a further differentiation we propose to start with using the number of times specific statements are mentioned. Based on this measure, the acceptance and relevance of certain statements can be roughly estimated. However, it is undisputed that the frequent reference of an obviously false allegation does not make the content of the assertion more evident. Therefore, we propose to additionally distinguish five levels of evidence that differ as regards content:

- Level I: Plausible statement without further justification. The statement is not visibly false and neither conceptually nor empirically supported. Example: *Technique T is easy to use.*

⁴ See: Fettke, P., Houy, C., and Loos, P. (2010): On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented Business and Information Systems Engineering - Conceptual Foundations, Application Example, and Implications; Business Information Systems Engineering (BISE), Vol. 2. 2010, I. 6; p. 354.

- Level II: Plausible statement which is proven by merely conceptual consideration without empirical evidence. Example: *Technique T is easy to use since during its design the key success factor of a clear user interface was taken into consideration.*
- Level III: Statement that is backed up by exemplary experience. Example: *Technique T is easy to use. This was illustrated by three case studies in which T has been exemplarily used.*
- Level IV: Statement that has held good in a variety of applications. Example: *A field experiment with a representative group showed that the technique T is easy to use for a significantly higher proportion of users (90 %). Conflicting observations were made for some few participants.*
- Level V: Statement which applies without exception or which can be deductively derived from acknowledged statements. Example: *Accepted assumption: Process modeling languages support communication about business processes. Fact: Technique T is a process modeling language. Conclusion: T supports communications on business processes.*⁵

⁵ Fettke, P., Houy, C., and Loos, P. (2010): On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented Business and Information Systems Engineering - Conceptual Foundations, Application Example, and Implications; Business Information Systems Engineering (BISE), Vol. 2. 2010, I. 6; pp. 353f.

3 Design Knowledge about Event-driven Process Chains

Design Knowledge about the technique „Event-driven Process Chains“			
Context	<p>Context and short description of the technique Business processes are essential design objects in the context of the introduction and design of information systems. The development of graphical representations of business processes is an important task that is usually covered by a process or system designer and, among others, serves the communication about processes. The technique has been developed in order to support the graphical representation of semantic business process models from a dynamic point of view. EPC represent the chronological sequence of functions and connect the different elements belonging to the different views of the Architecture of Integrated Information systems (ARIS) (Keller et al. 1992).</p>		
Superior goal	<p>Superior goal The intended design goal of EPC, as explicitly formulated in the fundamental contribution of Keller et al. (1992), is the identification and documentation of business processes in a company. Its usage is supposed to assure the company’s success by supporting process-oriented organization.</p>		
Characteristics of the technique	Characteristics regarding the minimum requirements of the technique	Number of references / levels of evidence	References
	Effects		
	1. EPC support the communication between persons involved in the process.	11 Sources / Level III	<i>Dehnert 2002; Dehnert et al. 2001; Fichtenbauer et al. 2002; Gruhn et al. 2005; Krumnow et al. 2008; Loos et al. 2001; Mendling et al. 2007; Recker et al. 2009; Rittgen 2000b; Thomas et al. 2006a; van Dongen et al. 2007</i>
	2. Through formalizing the EPC the method allows for an automated execution of processes.	13 Sources / Level III	<i>Allweyer 2007; Barborka et al. 2006; Kahl et al. 2005; Kopp et al. 2007; Kruczynski 2008; Lübke 2006; Moldt et al. 2000; Seidlmeier et al. 2007; Störrle 2006; Thomas et al. 2006a; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Dongen et al. 2007; van Hee et al. 2005</i>
	3. Through formalizing the EPC the method allows for an automated analysis of processes.	14 Sources / Level III	<i>Barborka et al. 2006; Denne 2006; Gruhn et al. 2005; Gruhn et al. 2008; Kern et al. 2007; Krumnow et al. 2008; List et al. 2006; Moldt et al. 2000; Rodenhagen 2002; Störrle 2006; Thomas et al. 2006a; van der Aalst 1999; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Dongen et al. 2007</i>
	4. The semi-formal semantics of EPC allows for developing expressive models with a high degree of freedom.	5 Sources / Level II	<i>Dehnert 2002; Fettke et al. 2003; Rittgen 2000b; Scheer et al. 2005a; Wehler 2007</i>
	5. EPC enables intuitive graphical process models.	11 Sources / Level II	<i>Becker et al. 2003; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Kopp et al. 2006; Kruczynski 2008; Mendling et al. 2003a; Mendling et al. 2007; van der Aalst 1999; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Dongen et al. 2007; Wehler 2007</i>
	6. EPC models can easily be interpreted.	1 Source / Level I	<i>Thomas et al. 2004</i>

Repeatability		
1. EPC are a widely used modeling language.	40 Sources / Level IV	<i>Brüning et al. 2008; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Dünnebacke et al. 2009; Fettke 2009; Fettke et al. 2003; Gadatsch 2009; Green et al. 1999; Green et al. 2000; Gruhn et al. 2006; Gruhn et al. 2007; Kahl et al. 2005; Kruczynski 2008; Loos et al. 2001; Lübke et al. 2005; Mendling et al. 2004; Mendling et al. 2003a; Mendling et al. 2003b; Mendling et al. 2003c; Mendling et al. 2003d; Mendling et al. 2007; Mendling et al. 2008; Moldt et al. 2000; Nüttgens et al. 2002a; Recker et al. 2009; Rittgen 2000b; Rittgen 2000c; Rodenhagen 2002; Sarshar et al. 2005; Scheer et al. 2005a; Schneider et al. 2003a; Simon et al. 2006; Thomas et al. 2002; Thomas et al. 2005; Thomas et al. 2004; van der Aalst 1999; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Hee et al. 2005; vom Brocke et al. 2009; Wehler 2007</i>
Impersonality		
1. The EPC method is easy to understand.	12 Sources / Level III	<i>Becker et al. 2003; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Green et al. 2000; Kruczynski 2008; Krumnow et al. 2008; List et al. 2006; Loos et al. 2001; Mendling et al. 2005b; Rittgen 2000c; Thomas et al. 2004; van der Aalst 1999</i>
2. The EPC method is easy to learn.	5 Sources / Level II	<i>Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Dehnert et al. 2001; Loos et al. 2001; Rittgen 2000c</i>
3. EPC are flexibly applicable.	3 Sources / Level I	<i>Dehnert et al. 2001; Rittgen 2000b; Rittgen 2000c</i>
4. Numerous users and consultants are familiar with the EPC method.	3 Sources / Level III	<i>Mendling et al. 2005b; Moldt et al. 2000; Rittgen 2000a</i>
5. EPC are easily applicable.	1 Source / Level I	<i>Rittgen 2000a</i>
Characteristics regarding the comparative requirements of the technique	Number of references / levels of evidence	References
Relevance		
1. The EPC method enables intuitive graphical process models.	11 Sources / Level II	<i>Becker et al. 2003; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Kopp et al. 2006; Kruczynski 2008; Mendling et al. 2003a; Mendling et al. 2007; van der Aalst 1999; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Dongen et al. 2007; Wehler 2007</i>
2. EPC are able to adequately represent complex real facts.	1 Source / Level II	<i>Schneider et al. 2003a</i>
3. The EPC method is an application-oriented method.	4 Sources / Level I	<i>Scheer et al. 2005b; Thomas et al. 2002; Thomas et al. 2005; Thomas et al. 2004</i>
4. EPC are in step with actual practice.	2 Sources / Level I	<i>Rittgen 2000c; Rodenhagen 2002</i>
5. The EPC method is not without controversy.	1 Source / Level II	<i>Rittgen 2000c</i>
6. The EPC method is an imprecise modeling method.	1 Source / Level I	<i>Rittgen 2000c</i>

Application domain		
1. EPC are suited to support process orientation in the administrative environment.	4 Sources / Level III	<i>Becker et al. 2003; Sarshar et al. 2005a; Scheer et al. 2005b; Thomas et al. 2004</i>
Side effects		
1. EPC models can be ambiguous.	17 Sources / Level III	<i>Cuntz et al. 2005; Cuntz et al. 2004; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert et al. 2001; Fettke et al. 2003; Fichtenbauer et al. 2002; Mendling et al. 2003a; Mendling et al. 2006; Recker et al. 2009; Rittgen 2000a; Rittgen 2000b; Rittgen 2000c; Rodenhagen 2002; Thomas et al. 2006b; van der Aalst et al. 2002; van der Aalst 1999; Wehler 2007</i>
2. EPC models can be misunderstood.	4 Sources / Level III	<i>Dehnert 2001; Dehnert et al. 2001; Rittgen 2000b; Schmidt et al. 2009</i>
3. Ambiguities in EPC models lead to different understandings of a process.	2 Sources / Level II	<i>Dehnert 2001; Dehnert et al. 2001</i>
Degree of maturity		
1. EPC are a widely used modeling language.	40 Sources / Level IV	<i>Brüning et al. 2008; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Dünnebacke et al. 2009; Fettke 2009; Fettke et al. 2003; Gadatsch 2009; Green et al. 1999; Green et al. 2000; Gruhn et al. 2006; Gruhn et al. 2007; Kahl et al. 2005; Kruczynski 2008; Loos et al. 2001; Lübke et al. 2005; Mendling et al. 2004; Mendling et al. 2003a; Mendling et al. 2003b; Mendling et al. 2003c; Mendling et al. 2003d; Mendling et al. 2007; Mendling et al. 2008; Moldt et al. 2000; Nüttgens et al. 2002a; Recker et al. 2009; Rittgen 2000b; Rittgen 2000c; Rodenhagen 2002; Sarshar et al. 2005; Scheer et al. 2005a; Schneider et al. 2003a; Simon et al. 2006; Thomas et al. 2002; Thomas et al. 2005; Thomas et al. 2004; van der Aalst 1999; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Hee et al. 2005; vom Brocke et al. 2009; Wehler 2007</i>
2. EPC modeling is comprehensively supported by tools.	11 Sources / Level III	<i>Barborka et al. 2006; Becker et al. 2003; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Dehnert et al. 2001; Geissler et al. 2002; Mendling et al. 2005b; Thomas et al. 2006a; Thomas et al. 2002; Thomas et al. 2005; Thomas et al. 2004</i>
3. EPC represent an established standard method for process modeling.	10 Sources / Level II	<i>Kahl et al. 2005; Kruczynski 2008; Krumnow et al. 2008; Petsch et al. 2008; Schneider et al. 2003a; Seel et al. 2005; Seidlmeier et al. 2007; Thomas et al. 2006a; Thomas et al. 2005; Thomas et al. 2004</i>
4. There exist several different XML-based exchange formats for EPC models.	7 Sources / Level III	<i>Barborka et al. 2006; Geissler et al. 2002; Mendling 2003; Mendling et al. 2004; Mendling et al. 2003b; Mendling et al. 2003d; Mendling et al. 2005b</i>

Variants of the technique	5. There exists a plenty of different verification approaches for EPC models.	3 Sources / Level III	<i>Gruhn et al. 2008; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Dongen et al. 2007</i>
	6. Numerous users and consultants are familiar with the EPC method.	3 Sources / Level III	<i>Mendling et al. 2005b; Moldt et al. 2000; Rittgen 2000a</i>
	7. In practice there already exist a lot of EPC process models.	1 Source / Level III	<i>Moldt et al. 2000</i>
	Degree of routine of the application		
	1. Through formalizing the EPC the method allows for an automated execution of processes.	13 Sources / Level III	<i>Allweyer 2007; Barborka et al. 2006; Kahl et al. 2005; Kopp et al. 2007; Kruczynski 2008; Lübke 2006; Moldt et al. 2000; Seidlmeier et al. 2007; Störrle 2006; Thomas et al. 2006a; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Dongen et al. 2007; van Hee et al. 2005</i>
	2. Through formalizing the EPC the method allows for an automated analysis of processes.	14 Sources / Level III	<i>Barborka et al. 2006; Denne 2006; Gruhn et al. 2005; Gruhn et al. 2008; Kern et al. 2007; Krumnow et al. 2008; List et al. 2006; Moldt et al. 2000; Rodenhagen 2002; Störrle 2006; Thomas et al. 2006a; van der Aalst 1999; van Dongen et al. 2005; van Dongen et al. 2007</i>
	3. The EPC method is easy to understand.	12 Sources / Level III	<i>Becker et al. 2003; Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Green et al. 2000; Kruczynski 2008; Krumnow et al. 2008; List et al. 2006; Loos et al. 2001; Mendling et al. 2005b; Rittgen 2000c; Thomas et al. 2004; van der Aalst 1999</i>
	4. The EPC method is easy to learn.	5 Sources / Level II	<i>Dehnert 2001; Dehnert 2002; Dehnert et al. 2001; Loos et al. 2001; Rittgen 2000c</i>
	Costs		
	The exact costs of application are unknown.	The works examined here state nothing about the costs of using the EPC method. A distinction is to be made here in e.g. the cost of procurement for the tool, which can vary a lot since EPC are used by different tools with or without costs, as well as training costs, etc.	
	Efficiency		
	Exact values about the efficiency of the method are unknown.	As the costs of the application cannot be specified exactly it is also impossible to predict the efficiency of the method.	
	Variants of the technique The technique has been continuously evolved since its introduction in 1992. In this context the method has been extended by different additional functionalities and approaches, e.g. for further formalization. A selection of variants is presented in the following overview which extends the list presented by Sarshar et al. (2005). The overview distinguishes between comprehensive extensions (EPC variants) and smaller extensions by other constructs. EPC extensions are normally based on specific requirements and objectives which are also documented in the following overview.		

	Objective supported by a variant or an extension	Name of the variant or extension	References
EPC variants	Modeling processes for context-sensitive real-time systems	Real-Time-Extension of EPC (rEPC)	<i>Hoffmann et al. 1993</i>
	Integrated modeling of processes and involved objects	Object-oriented EPC (oEPC)	<i>Scheer et al. 1997</i>
	Formalization of EPC for automation respectively for software design	Modified EPC (modEPC)	<i>Rittgen 1999</i>
		Formal definition of syntax and semantics	<i>Nüttgens et al. 2002b</i>
		Reference framework for the definition of non-local semantics	<i>Kindler 2003</i>
	Process modeling for agent-oriented information systems	Agent-oriented variant (xEPC)	<i>Kirn et al. 2000</i>
	Modeling of fuzzy process knowledge	Fuzzy EPC	<i>Thomas et al. 2002</i>
	Introduction of necessary constructs for the representation of established workflow patterns	Yet another EPC (yEPC)	<i>Mendling et al. 2005a</i>
	Modeling of collaboration in inter-organizational processes	Collaboration-oriented EPC (zEPC)	<i>Hinderer 2005</i>
	Modeling of services in EPC	Service-oriented EPC (sEPC)	<i>Huth et al. 2008</i>
	Extension by other constructs	Simplification of EPC structures	Optional sequence of functions: SEQ-connector
		Placement of decision tables: ET-operator	<i>Rosemann 1996</i>
		Reduction of the number of information objects: IOR ₁ -operator	
		Representation and hierarchization of important process components by process objects	<i>Rosemann 1996</i>
Differentiation between events and states in EPC		Event-state-constructs	<i>Schütte 1998</i>
Description of organizational structures and responsibilities in inter-organizational processes		Visualization of the organization view in EPC	<i>Schüppler 1998</i>
Description of objects, object states and object interactions in processes		Extension of EPC with UML elements	<i>Loos et al. 1998</i>
Representation and description of process objects in inter-organizational processes		Process objects migration function	<i>Kugeler 2002</i>
Generation of multiple instances of a sub-process in a superior process		Connector for multiple instantiations	<i>Rodenhagen 2002</i>
Representation and evaluation of risks in EPC models		Information-object-type "risk"	<i>Brabänder et al. 2002</i>
Visualization and description of customer integration		Elements of customer integration	<i>Schneider et al. 2003b</i>
Modeling of inter-organizational business processes	Inter-organizational extensions	<i>Klein et al. 2004</i>	

	Representation of fuzzy rules in EPC models	Attribution of EPC constructs and rule integration	<i>Thomas et al. 2006a</i>
	Semantic annotation of EPC models	Semantic representation of EPC (sEPC)	<i>Thomas et al. 2006b</i>
	Integration of web services in EPC	Service elements and service attributes	<i>Marx Gómez et al. 2007</i>
	Extension of EPC for modeling risks in order to support risk management	Risk elements	<i>Winkelmann et al. 2008</i>
Alternative techniques	Common alternative techniques include the Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN), UML activity diagrams, Petri nets or YAWL (Yet Another Workflow Language). These alternative techniques use different graphical elements in order to focus on different aspects of process modeling and their representation.		

Table 2: Design Knowledge about Event-driven Process Chains

4 Design Knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach

4.1 Overview

In the following another application example of the framework for systemizing design knowledge is presented. Therefore design knowledge concerning the Process Grammar Approach is documented and systemized by means of the framework. The feasibility of the framework is thus not only demonstrated by means of an established technique like EPC but also with this rather “young” technique.

Lee et al. present the Process Grammar Approach in an article in *MIS Quarterly*.⁶ A search in international data bases like *EBSCOhost* (<http://search.ebscohost.com>) or *Scopus* (<http://www.scopus.com>) has shown that no further contributions concerning this technique have so far been published. Thus, the design knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach visualized in table 3 on the next page is based on a reconstruction of knowledge presented in the original contribution of Lee et al.

⁶ Lee, J., Wyner, G.M., and Pentland, B.T. (2008): Process Grammar as a Tool for Business Process Design; *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 32, 2008, I. 4; pp. 757-778.

Design Knowledge about the technique T "Process Grammar Approach"			
Context	<p>Context and short description of the technique T Business processes are considered as an important design object in designing information systems. In this context the Process Grammar Approach by Lee et al. (2008) represents an adequate design technique. In general it can be assumed that a plenty of different variants of one business process exists.</p> <p>The technique T consists of a set three sub-techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technique T₁ and T₂ (design method): The design method is conceptually based on so called process grammars. In order to concretize the technique the authors describe several steps for a successful construction (technique T₁) and application (technique T₂) of process grammars in the context of a particular application scenario (sales scenario). - Technique T₃ (software prototype): The application of the technique T is supported by a software prototype which has additionally been developed by the authors. This software prototype provides its users with methodical help during the process of constructing and applying process grammars. <p>The technique T is only partly documented in the publication. The techniques T₁ and T₂ are described in a detailed way. T₃ is only documented by means of a few screen shots. Thus only little knowledge about the software prototype is publicly available.</p>		
Superior goal	<p>Superior goal The superior goal of the Process Grammar Approach is to support an information system designer in the context of the identification and evaluation of different business process design alternatives. The authors mention four essential criteria which support the evaluation of their technique. By means of these criteria the effects and the potential success of the technique can be assessed:</p> <p>Criterion C₁: The extent to which the commonly observed alternatives are generated by the technique T.</p> <p>Criterion C₂: The number of generated alternatives that are not currently observed.</p> <p>Criterion C₃: The extent to which the technique T helps us to understand why some alternatives are commonly observed and why others are not.</p> <p>Criterion C₄: The usability and usefulness of the technique T for the task of process alternative design.</p>		
Characteristics of the technique	Characteristics regarding the minimum requirements of the technique	Levels of evidence	Comments
	Effects Concerning the effects of the technique T only the observations of Lee et al. (2008) in reference to the four mentioned criteria are documented		
	1. The technique T achieves the objective in terms of criterion C ₁ . Commonly observed process variants are generated by the technique T.	III	(p. 774)
	2. The technique T achieves the objective in terms of criterion C ₂ . Also less commonly observed process variants and alternatives are generated by the technique T.	III	(p. 774)
3. The technique T achieves the objective in terms of criterion C ₃ . T helps the user to understand why some alternatives are commonly observed and why others are not. Relationships between several developed process variants are made transparent which supports the understanding of why some alternatives are feasible and others are not.	III	(p. 774)	

<p>4. The technique T achieves the objective in terms of criterion C₄. The usability of T is comparatively high. T supports the user in the context of choosing process alternatives without overcharging his cognitive ability with too many different process alternatives.</p>	<p>II</p>	<p>(pp. 774f.)</p>
<p>Repeatability</p>		
<p>The sub-techniques of T have been documented and implemented in a software prototype. Thus they can repeatedly be used.</p>	<p>III</p>	<p>The minimum requirement of repeatability is met which has been shown by the application of the technique in the example sales process (pp. 770f.).</p>
<p>Impersonality</p>		
<p>The sub-techniques of T can be used by every system designer.</p>	<p>II</p>	<p>The minimum requirement of impersonality is met. The instruction for use has been clearly documented so that every system designer can use the technique. (p. 761 and pp. 765ff.)</p>
<p>Characteristics regarding the comparative requirements of the technique</p>	<p>Levels of evidence</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>Relevance</p>		
<p>The technique T can make an interesting contribution in the context of business process design which makes it a technique of high relevance.</p>	<p>II</p>	<p>The relevance of technique T has been documented and explained in the introduction (pp. 757f.) and in the evaluation part of the article (p. 775).</p>
<p>The technique T is furthermore of high relevance because of its improved usability in comparison to different process-grammar-based design approaches.</p>	<p>II</p>	<p>The advantage of technique T in comparison to alternative techniques has been formulated regarding its usability (pp. 774f.).</p>
<p>Application domain</p>		
<p>The application domain of technique T is business process design. The approach supports the design and evaluation of different process design alternatives.</p>	<p>III</p>	<p>The application domain of technique T has been documented in the introduction of the article of Lee et al. (pp. 757f.).</p>
<p>Side effects</p>		
<p>Side effects and not intended effects of the technique T are currently unknown.</p>		<p>Side effects and not intended effects are not described in the article of Lee et al.</p>
<p>Degree of maturity</p>		
<p>The technique T has been prototypically implemented.</p>	<p>III</p>	<p>Except the description of Lee et al. no knowledge concerning the application and the degree of maturity of the technique T has been published so far. The technique is still at its initial stage (pp. 761ff.).</p>

	Degree of routine of the application		
	A detailed instruction for use has been documented for the technique T.	III	The use of the technique T has been documented and exemplarily shown in the context of a sales process. (pp. 765ff.).
	Costs		
	The exact costs of application are unknown.		Costs generated by the use of the technique T have not been documented so far. It can be expected that the use of T will result in usual costs for the use of software (e.g. training etc.)
	Efficiency		
	Exact values about the efficiency of the method are unknown.		As the costs of application cannot be specified exactly it is currently not possible to predict the efficiency of the method.
Variants of the technique	Variants of the technique Variants of the Process Grammar Approach are currently not known.		
Alternative techniques	Alternative techniques A mentioned alternative technique for a process-grammar-based design of business processes is the so called "process recombinator" (PR) of <i>Bernstein et al.</i> 1999. Furthermore some additional potential alternative techniques are described in the section „Previous Work“ (pp. 758ff.). These techniques also represent process-grammar-based approaches in the context of process-oriented business engineering. However, these techniques do not support the design and evaluation of process alternatives but the execution of business processes. Thus, they are only to a certain extent alternative techniques.		

Table 3: Design Knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach

4.2 Discussion

The documentation of design knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach is restricted to the knowledge presented in the underlying source of Lee et al. The provided overview in table 3 offers a system designer a concentrated summary of the potentials of the approach. The description of the context, the superior goal of the technique and in particular the representation of central characteristics of the technique allow for a precise assessment of the suitability for achieving a practical design goal. The system designer is provided a concentrated description of the technique and new options for action in the context of identifying and evaluating business process variants. Furthermore the system designer learns that the Process Grammar Approach is supposed to offer a better usability in comparison to similar techniques for process design. Based on the

rather restricted application experiences with this technique the documentation of the particular characteristics is relatively short and only rudimentary design knowledge can be provided in comparison to the other application example concerning EPCs. Nevertheless, first intended effects are documented and can support the decision on the testing or application of the Process Grammar Approach.

The minimum requirements of a technique are demonstrated for the Process Grammar Approach by the description of occurring effects, the repeatability of these effects and the property of the technique that it can be used by every system designer based on the given instruction for use. The criteria C_1 - C_4 which describe the particular objectives of the application of the technique are not operationalized in detail. The description of the criteria is rather general. Thus, an exact assessment, measurement or comparison of the achievement of objectives by the Process Grammar Approach with that of a different technique is not possible. Furthermore the design knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach is so far only documented in one literary source. Thus, no critical examination of the technique's characteristics has been documented until now. Nevertheless, by means of the provided level of evidence of the statements about the technique it can be assessed how well-supported the particular design knowledge is, e. g. by a plausible statement without further justification (Level I) or by the description of exemplary experience with the software prototype (Level III) etc.

The knowledge about the comparative requirements of a technique, e.g. like its relevance for business process design, its usability and its exact application domain, support the system designer in the context of assessing its potentials regarding his practical design objectives. As side effects or not intended effects of the application of the Process Grammar Approach are so far not documented, the system designer can only assess and estimate the risks of application of the technique on the basis of his experiences with comparable techniques. The degree of maturity and the potential risks of practical application is pointed out to the system designer by the fact that the knowledge about the technique is still at its early stages. Based on the detailed instruction for use, the system designer can receive an impression of the potential degree of routine of the application of the Process Grammar Approach. This supports the estimation of personnel-related costs to a certain extent. More precise knowledge about other costs and the efficiency of the technique's application has not been documented so far. Thus, the system designer does not have well-grounded information for taking a decision on the practical use of the technique. For the system designer who is interested in the identification and evalua-

tion of different variants of a business process the documented knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach is relevant in several regards:

- **Economic relevance:** The documented knowledge describes the fundamental functionalities and effects of the Process Grammar Approach which are per se of economic relevance in the context of system design. The Process Grammar Approach is a novel technique for the design of business processes and represents an innovative solution in this field. If a system designer has got the knowledge about this technique, then he expects it to support a more effective and efficient design of business processes. Based on the detailed instruction for use and the documented effects, the system design expects the technique to be applicable with comparably low personnel-related expenses. The exact expenses remain unclear by reason of the novelty of the technique and have to be assessed based on application tests.
- **Relevance for problem solving:** By providing an innovative approach for process design the technique helps solving relevant problems in this field. The system designer is offered new possibilities for identifying and evaluating alternative process designs. The software prototype presents these alternatives in a clearly-arranged overview. If the system designer knows the technique and its characteristics or he has access to the documented knowledge about the technique, then he can consider the technique in the context of solving his practical problems. If the system designer does not know the technique he cannot benefit from its potentials.
- **Theoretical relevance:** The documentation of knowledge about the Process Grammar Approach, its characteristics and potentials is of great relevance for the theory of Business and Information Systems Engineering.⁷ Innovative and novel functionalities of techniques are examined and potentially explained by the theory of business and information systems engineering. Innovative knowledge about interdependencies and potential cause-effect-relations concerning a technique is generated by the examination and explanation of the technique and can serve as a basis for further development in the context of software-supported process design.

⁷ In this context the term „Theory of BISE” has to be understood according to the research framework in section 2 of the underlying article, pp. 348f.

5 Summary

The presented supplemental considerations and application examples offer a deeper insight into the possibilities of the framework for systemizing and documenting design knowledge which has been introduced in the article „On the Relevance of Design Knowledge for Design-Oriented Business and Information Systems Engineering – Conceptual Foundations, Application Example, and Implications” in the special issue on Science of Business and Information Systems Engineering. Through the additional application example concerning the Process Grammar Approach and the following discussion, the possibilities of the framework could be pointed out in more detail. The authors hope that this supplement helps to bring forward further fruitful discussions on the relevance of design knowledge in the design-oriented research.

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Unter der wissenschaftlichen Leitung von Professor Dr. Peter Loos sind am Institut für Wirtschaftsinformatik (IWi) im Deutschen Forschungszentrum für Künstliche Intelligenz (DFKI) mehr als 60 Mitarbeiter im Bereich der anwendungsnahen Forschung beschäftigt. Seit das Institut vor 30 Jahren durch Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. August-Wilhelm Scheer gegründet wurde, wird hier in Forschung und Lehre das Informations- und Prozessmanagement in Industrie, Dienstleistung und Verwaltung vorangetrieben. Ein besonderer Anspruch liegt dabei auf dem Technologietransfer von der Wissenschaft in die Praxis.

Die interdisziplinäre Struktur der Mitarbeiter und Forschungsprojekte fördert zusätzlich den Austausch von Spezialwissen aus unterschiedlichen Fachbereichen. Die Zusammenarbeit mit kleinen und mittelständischen Unternehmen (KMU) hat einen bedeutenden Einfluss auf die angewandte Forschungsarbeit - wie auch Projekte im Bildungs- und Wissensmanagement eine wichtige Rolle spielen. So werden in virtuellen Lernwelten traditionelle Lehrformen revolutioniert. Das Institut für Wirtschaftsinformatik berücksichtigt den steigenden Anteil an Dienstleistungen in der Wirtschaft durch die Unterstützung servicespezifischer Geschäftsprozesse mit innovativen Informationstechnologien und fortschrittlichen Organisationskonzepten. Zentrale Themen sind Service Engineering, Referenzmodelle für die öffentliche Verwaltung sowie die Vernetzung von Industrie, Dienstleistung und Verwaltung.

Am Standort im DFKI auf dem Campus der Universität des Saarlandes werden neben den Lehrtätigkeiten im Fach Wirtschaftsinformatik die Erforschung zukünftiger Bildungsformen durch neue Technologien wie Internet und Virtual Reality vorangetrieben. Hier führt das Institut Kooperationsprojekte mit nationalen und internationalen Partnern durch: Lernen und Lehren werden neu gestaltet; Medienkompetenz und lebenslanges Lernen werden Realität. Zudem beschäftigen sich die Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter mit dem Einsatz moderner Informationstechniken in der Industrie. In Kooperation mit industrieorientierten Lehrstühlen der technischen Fakultäten saarländischer Hochschulen werden Forschungsprojekte durchgeführt. Hauptaufgabengebiete sind die Modellierung und Simulation industrieller Geschäftsprozesse, Workflow- und Groupware-Systeme sowie Konzepte für die virtuelle Fabrik.

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