Book Review: Temporal Structures in Individual Time Management: Practices to Enhance Calendar Tool Design

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Book Information

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BOOK REVIEW

Time is an invaluable and non-renewable resource in human life. Each one of us has 1440 minutes on one's disposal each day. Since we cannot create more time; we must make the best use of the time we are bestowed upon. Globalization, emphasis on quality, cut-throat competition, multiple roles, unlimited expectations, changed demographics and demands of the ever-dynamic environment have put the pressure on the individual. The survival, success and happiness of the individual thus are a function of his use of time management strategies and his ability. In this tough race, fast and steady is going to win the race to have a peaceful nap in the end and then to again get going.

This book, "Temporal Structures in Individual Time Management: Practices to Enhance Calendar Tool Design" discusses time in terms of concepts, methodologies, techniques, tools and perspectives which are essential for understanding individual time management strategies, with a strong focus on personal temporal structure usage involving calendar tools. The book provides evidence and insights for researchers and practitioners to enhance the current electronic calendar system design and implementation. The book deals with personal temporal structure usage involving calendar tools in great details so that a person can make the best use of time.

The author discusses the temporal designs of work (8.00 a.m. to 5.00p.m. with an hour-long lunch break in between, for example) as one type of temporal structure created by our society based on human social practices and temporal cycle of our bodies. She talks about the complexity of temporality in our society and throws light on the social aspects of time (socially constructed time).The artifacts, for example clocks and calendar, record the activities and events through a variety of schedules, which represent both socially constructed and objective time. The temporality is also affected by social structures and society temporal regularity. The explicit temporal structures (for example holidays) and implicit temporal structures (for example an anniversary) also decide the pattern of time management. The research reported in this book extends temporal structure theories and evidence for investigating new user requirements to enhance the current electronic calendar systems. This research also offers insights on capturing and utilizing surrounding temporal structures for successful personal time management practices.

The book introduces the concept of time based on prior time research and its related concepts. Quantitative and qualitative time, clock-based and event-based time and linear and cyclical time are discussed in the book. The complexity of temporal phenomena is dealt with in the book in great detail. The purpose is to introduce important time concepts to the readers to make learning flow naturally through out the book. To understand how individuals perceive time, psychological aspects of time are also explored, particularly focusing on individual's time urgency and time perspective. The book reviews and synthesizes time management and temporal personality literatures in organization behaviour, experimental psychology and educational psychology fields as well as some practical time management handbooks.

The author identifies how individuals process temporal structure information to develop insights into quality time management. The book presents the study results of two in-depth interviews with twenty professionals for identifying what types of temporal structures are being used in their personal time management practices and possible design implications to further design the current electronic calendar tools. It seeks to find out whether temporal structure is an important component of individual time management practices.

To study time management statistically the book reports descriptive data analyses, construct independence and univariate analyses for a large survey study. The book also describes the process of normality tests, skewness and kurtosis analyses.

The book tries to identify who are effective time managers? The chapter presents the bivariate analysis results, and compares the differences between effective time managers and ineffective time managers based upon their temporal structure knowledge, usage and relationship understanding.

The book enumerates useful and practical time management hints from users that were surveyed and it identifies user difficulties with the current electronic time management or calendar tools that users' desired calendar features. It describes additional stories and evidence from individual users regarding their time management practices and their expectations about what ideal calendars or time management tools are needed. The author supports the argument for the need to design and implement calendar tools that incorporate more temporal structures than the limited ones that are now being used. A longitudinal study, presented in chapter 12, summarizes and extrapolates the results presented and combines this data with salient results from the interviews presented in the book .Explicit suggestions are made for design opportunities that would capture currently unavailable or difficult to capture temporal structures.

The book presents the key findings for this research. Chapter 13 demonstrates how this work is related to the fields of information systems, computer science and human computer interaction. It discusses the limitations of this research and describes future research directions that arise from the results of this research.

The book, in chapter 13, describes concepts, systems and experiences with computer-aided collaborative scheduling and in chapter 14 introduces the concept of E-scheduling. The purpose of these chapters is to help the practitioner not to encounter any barrier in implementing calendar tools. The principal issues of effective learning space management of an online course (workload management, student management and time management) are discussed in chapter 15 so that all the important aspects of space management of an online course are dealt with at great length.

The themes discussed in the book; the complexity of temporal phenomena, the alignment of temporal structures with personal temporal constraints and their effect on personal productivity, temporal personalities and management of time, electronic time management, personal time management, current calendar tools etc.; present a complete sphere of time management and their synergistic combination brings out effective time management. The book differentiates between effective and ineffective time managers based on their temporal structure usage and understanding. The book also enumerates useful and practical time management hints for readers and users. It covers the latest techniques, tools, methodologies and perspectives to help manage time effectively. It also provides qualitative and quantitative evidences and insights for enhancing current electronic calendar system design and implementation.

The book tries to bridge the gap existing between temporal structure usage in personal time management practices and the current electronic calendar design. It offers takeaways for all: researchers, practitioners and organizations. Researchers and practitioners in the area of human-computer interaction, information system and computer science as well as people who are generally interested in improving their time-management will benefit immensely from the book as it singularly focuses on temporal structuring in individual time management and provides thoughtful insights into temporal personalities, calendar tools, time dichotomies, and effectiveness of time management. For organizations the process of capturing, retrieving and creating temporal structures, is indeed a knowledge management process and therefore the book provides useful hints to design more appropriate and effective temporal structures for their employees for higher productivity.