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If I was forced to make my presentation very short, I would use 2 words only:

- **USABILITY**
- **SIMPLICITY**

Watch out for these words: you are going to see them around more and more from now on.

An encouraging sign: a 2-page article on USABILITY in the Digital Ship issue of Jan-Feb 2007 (p12) you are holding in your hands.

Following yesterday's discussion, I took the decision to drop most part of my presentation, which you can find on the web anyway if you want it –

<http://www.thedigitalship.com/powerpoints/DSAthens/TasosMakris,GourdmichalisMaritime.pdf>

and concentrate on these two words.

Why?

Because the situation is already complex enough with so much hardware and software surrounding our lives.

The catalogue of features exhibited by both hardware and software is long, maybe TOO LONG.

As an IT Manager, my agony is to use these features properly, accurately, effectively.

Why in agony?

Because of the following sentence which I happened to read last summer and set off an alarm in me.

“The drive for progress, accompanied by a declining knowledge of science by the end users, can lead to irreversible disaster.

The more sophisticated and powerful a technological system becomes, so the more susceptible it is likely to be to breakdowns and subtle malfunctions.

Similarly, the more far reaching will be the consequences of breakdowns.

Arthur Clarke: “Superiority”

I read this book at a time when we were in the middle of a horror story, in which the protagonist was a FLEET-77 device, in the middle of the Pacific ocean.

The 5 E's of USABILITY

- Easy to use
- Effective
- Efficient
- Error tolerant
- Enjoyable

Our systems offer already a lot of functionality. It's now time to measure how well they perform by measuring their **USABILITY** and **SIMPLICITY**.

What we really need, are systems with fewer features but with a higher degree of **USABILITY**.

This is the only way, in my opinion, to ensure that the training will not cost as much as the system itself and that the job will be done easily, efficiently, with less computer rage.



To draw the parallel with shipboard systems, I would quote Dr Earthy from the Digital Ship article:

“Everyone agrees ship systems should be easy to use, but they rarely are, due to the different interest groups involved, disjointed legislation and the fact that the seafarers, who actually use the systems, have the quietest voice.”

We, IT Managers, represent the seafarers and we have, maybe, some power when we choose the systems for them. Lets add **USABILITY** and **SIMPLICITY** to our requirements.

Whether you are evaluating an Accounting program, a simple report or a web site, try to measure it's usability level by applying the 5Es.

USABILITY does not add much to the total cost, because it is mainly a frame of mind, if you are ready for it.

If you want to know more about USABILITY, read the Digital Ship article and follow the links provided.

If you want to know more about SIMPLICITY, search for the name John Maeda and his Ten Laws of Simplicity.

Remember that USABILITY is a gift nobody will offer, unless you ASK for it. In some cases you have even to fight for it.

Thank you !