

Bringing life into references process models: A participatory approach for identifying, discussing, and resolving model adaptations

Michael Schermann¹, Michael Prilla², Helmut Krcmar¹, Thomas Herrmann²

¹Chair for Information Systems
Technische Universität München
Boltzmannstraße 3
85748 Garching
michael.schermann@in.tum.de
krcmar@in.tum.de

²Department of Information and
Technology Management
Institute for Applied Work Science
Ruhr-Universität Bochum
44780 Bochum
michael.prilla@rub.de
thomas.herrmann@rub.de

Abstract: Although reference models are focal research objects in our discipline, surprisingly little guidance can be found on the actual process of identifying and resolving adaptations to reference models. Hence, we present a participatory workshop approach that enables participants to resolve on adaptations by model-based discourse. We found that three design principles influence the outcome of the workshop: First, we argue that reference model should be constructed as a set of modules to reduce the complexity of adaptation tasks. The modules come with a domain-specific set of adaptation triggers. Second, we applied a discursive process walkthrough. We use the triggers as guiding questions during this phase. Third, when the participants resolved on an adaptation to the model, they additionally had to agree on action items that are necessary to implement the adaptations made. Overall, our workshop approach closes the gap between construction and use of reference models.

1 Introduction¹

The goal of reference modeling in IS research is to capture and publish existing knowledge on how to design and structure information systems and business processes [BS04]. The technique of reference modeling has been adopted by companies in many industries (e.g. Software, Health, Banking) to denote good practices for designing business processes or application systems [BeKn02; FL04].

As the term *reference model* suggests, such models do not provide a specific solution to the problem at hand [Be02]. As Figure 1 shows, reference models have to be adapted

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