Work with ICT in the Inspectorate of Education of Flanders

- **Parallels and Dissimilarities**
- **Evolution in the use of ICT**

Sici – Prague 2009/12/04

The Inspectorate of Education of Flanders

- **Staff – Brussels**
  - # 1 IG – 9 CI – 7 adm./7 conc./3 IT
  - PC's connected through Intranet
- **Inspectors – Home Office**
  - # 160 for all educ. levels
  - Stand-alone PC
- **Core tasks – 9 programs**
  - IMM: 1 CI – 3 IT – 5 IT-inspectors

Before 2004

Process of digitalisation of inspection work: ups and downs

Before 2004

Before 2004

Infrastructure - *Mid '90's*

- **staff not interested**

  initiative and support started by IT-inspectors
  (Secondary → Primary → other levels)
- **free desktop and printer for each inspector**
- **desktop locked by department**
  - no utilities,
  - no possibility to install extra software

Before 2004

Infrastructure - *End '90's*

- free mechanical entrance to internet for home office (ISDN)
- free mailbox (Outlook)
- static internal website for documents and procedures
- public website for schools

Before 2004

Strenghts

- Uniform configuration (hard- and software)
- No extra costs
- Everyone within reach (digital)
- Digitalisation of first documents, procedures and instruments
- Schools have access to public part of website

Before 2004

Weaknesses

- **Standardised PC's**
  - Less or no extra professional software and utilities
  - Dependence of outsourcer for upgrading
  - Life cycle to long
- **Service package not flexible**
  - Runtime to long, only in central office
  - Online helpdesk not possible
  - Not inspection-minded → tension
- **Lot of problems with internet**
- **More and more local databases → different results**
- **Different levels of expertise**

Before 2004

Side effects

- **Mail traffic explodes**
  - between inspectors
  - between inspectors and staff in Brussels
- **Static internal website → indirectly**
  - To much top down management
  - Less interaction from the bottom
- **IT is for 'nerds': inspectors not involved**
  → umbrella-effect → misuse helpdesk → helpdesk explodes
- **To much manual operations on the work floor**
  → extra digitalisation afterwards at home → double work

Before 2004

Conclusions and needs

Ict

- Need for **more involvement** by individual inspector (empowerment)
- Need for **minimal IT-professionalization** by individual inspector and staff members
- **Responsibility** and **accountability** for hard- and software by individual inspector
- **Only support** (helpdesk) for **digital instruments** and **technical procedures** for professional use

Before 2004

Before 2004

Conclusions and needs

iCt

- **Reduce of mail traffic**
- **Need for a virtual interactive communication platform**
  (Computer Supported Co-operation Work System)
- **Need for virtual working place for teams**
  (CSCW-system)

Before 2004

Conclusions and needs

ic<u>T</u>

- Better and quicker data transmission and processing technology
- More web based applications
- Use of laptop instead of desktop (in schools and at home)
- Centralisation and integration of local databases

After 2004

IT-skills and IT-empowerment: ups and downs

After 2004

"Number four wasn't too bad - at least he removed his personal cd earphones for most of the interview."

After 2004

Solutions: Empowerment and accountability

Ict

- **A fixed lump sum ICT financing for**
  - buying hard- and software
  - service packet
  - recurrent costs
- **Obligation to install basic hardware architecture communication- and processing software**
  - responsible for digital communication
  - responsible for hard- and software and service pack
- **In-service training on demand**
  (as a result of consultation)

After 2004

Solutions: Empowerment and accountability

icT

- **SharePoint as CSCW-system**
  - Central place for communication and co-operation
  - Central library
    - for standardised documents,
    - for procedures and instruments
    - transparent ownership (internal quality manual)
  - Selective warning possibilities by individual inspector
- **Centralized datamanagement**

After 2004

Solutions: Empowerment and accountability

iCt

- **Communication by way of SharePoint**
    - News reports
    - Announcements
- **Virtual co-operation rooms for teams and developmental working groups**
    - Working processes
    - Library
    - Development of documents and reports
    - Team is responsible
- **Very concrete manuals with print screens**
  (don't think, just do)

After 2004

Strenghts

- **Independency from time and place**
  - Computer crashes no longer influence the working and management processes
  - more virtual co-operation and communication
- ...

After 2004

Strenghts

- ...
- **More empowerment and sensibility for the use of ICT in the job**
  - greater responsibility, also in relation to colleagues → increase of basic IT skills
  - IT-work became more accurate, less use of the umbrella syndrome
  - inspector can organise his own virtual working room
  - more flexible use of PC-installation possibilities
- **Every inspector use a laptop**

After 2004

Weaknesses

- Login procedures more complex
- SharePoint problems (updates, upgrades, ...) in weekends during peak moments and deadlines
- Every local PC is a unique case → connection and data transmission problems increase

After 2004

Side effects

- **The RTFM-syndrome**
  inspectors and staff don't read manuals

- **Inspectors become more and more ensure**
  → hidden for colleagues → dissatisfaction increases

- **Lack of discipline by Staff members**

- **Difficulty to rationalise and concretize the negative group dynamics**

After 2004

Conclusions

- **Amount of non-believers decreased spectacular**
- **The reduce of supporting time can be used for simple BI-applications**
  → automation of working processes → less manual operations → less mistakes → better output
- **Need for development of central module-based database**
- **...**

After 2004

Conclusions

- …
- **New and more complex applications create new problems**
  Ups and downs but globally seen there is a significant increasing trend regarding the mean level of IT-skills by the individual inspector
- **Need for support by staff members**
- **Advantages still greater than the disadvantages**

After 2004

After 2007

From ICT to IMM: ups and downs

After 2007

After 2007

Infrastructure

- **Less energy goes to support** of IT-skills of individual inspectors
  → more time for development of higher IT-skills
  → automation and BI-applications
- **Development of**
  - a digital process flow instrument to register the history of a school-audit → to be used by teams
  - an instrument to monitor the individual quality of school
  - specific benchmarks for schools
  - intelligent archive for the history of schools
  - digital process flow for members of audit administration

After 2007

Strenghts

- **Transparency** in procedures and processes of individual inspector
  → Nobody can hide himself → pressure on quality
- **Digital thinking sets pressure** on long term strategies and stable procedures and processes
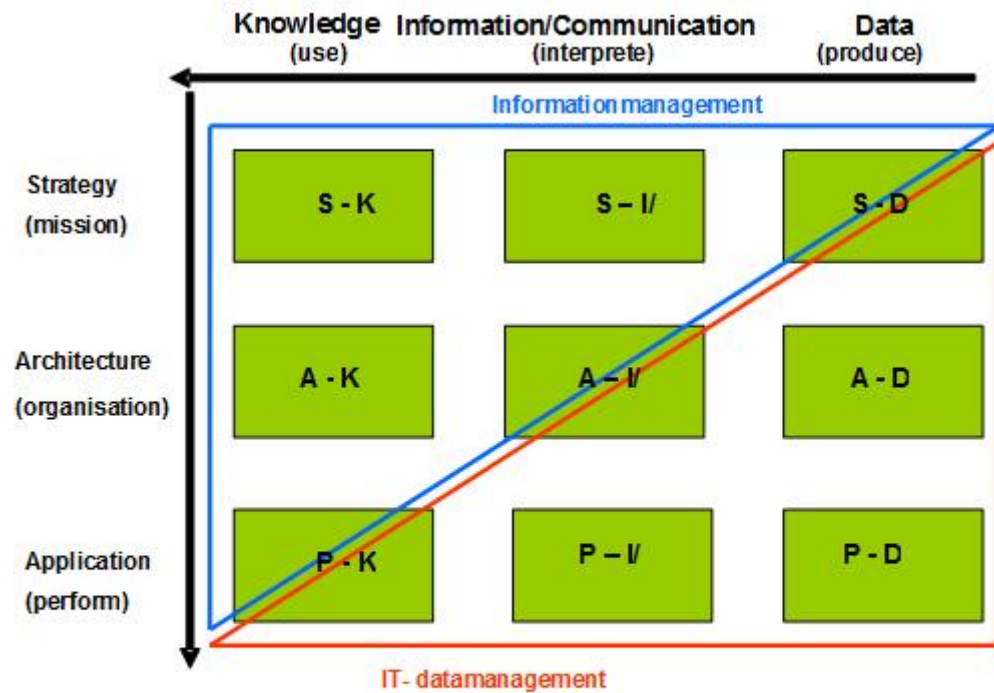
Weaknesses

- **Tension between business questions and the digital more rigid solutions**
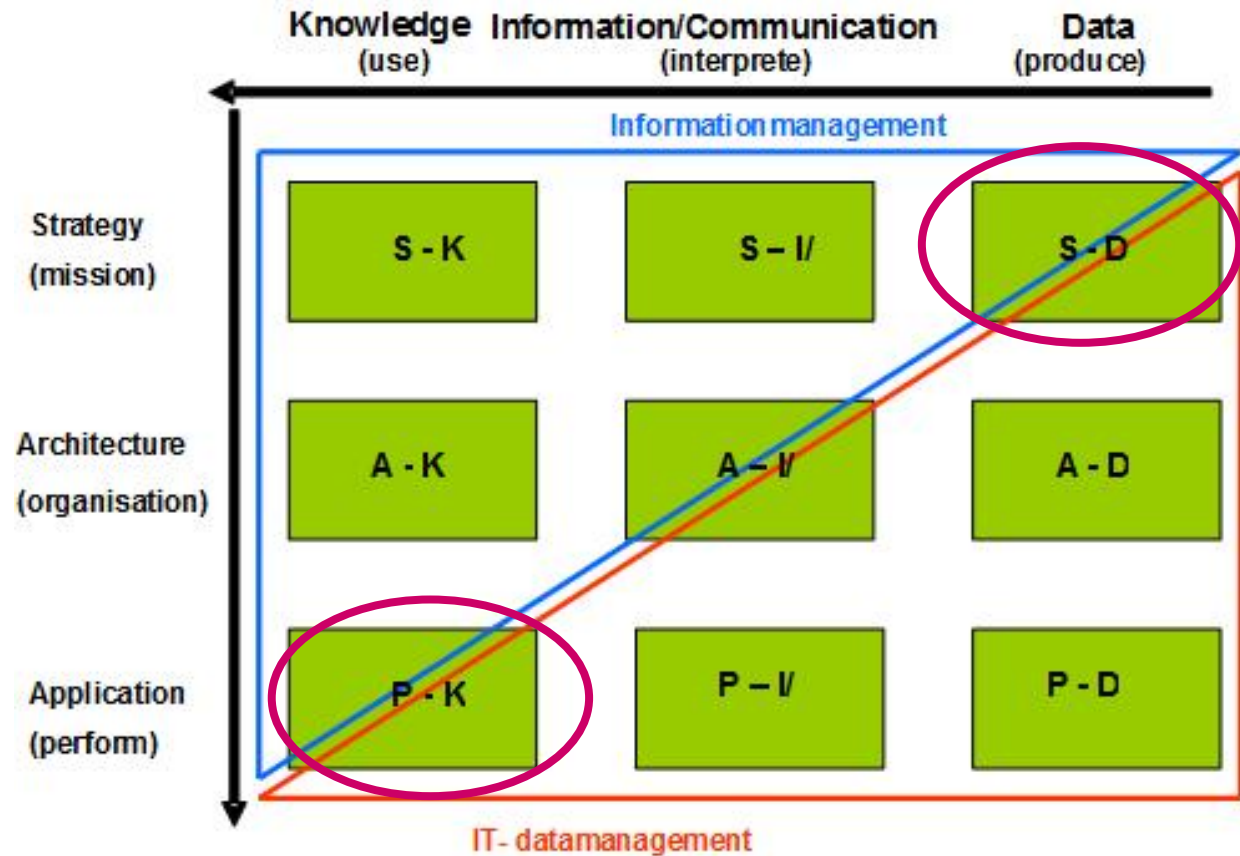- **Organisation has to plan with more strictly deadlines**
- **Less flexibility**

After 2007

Step by step from ICT to IMM

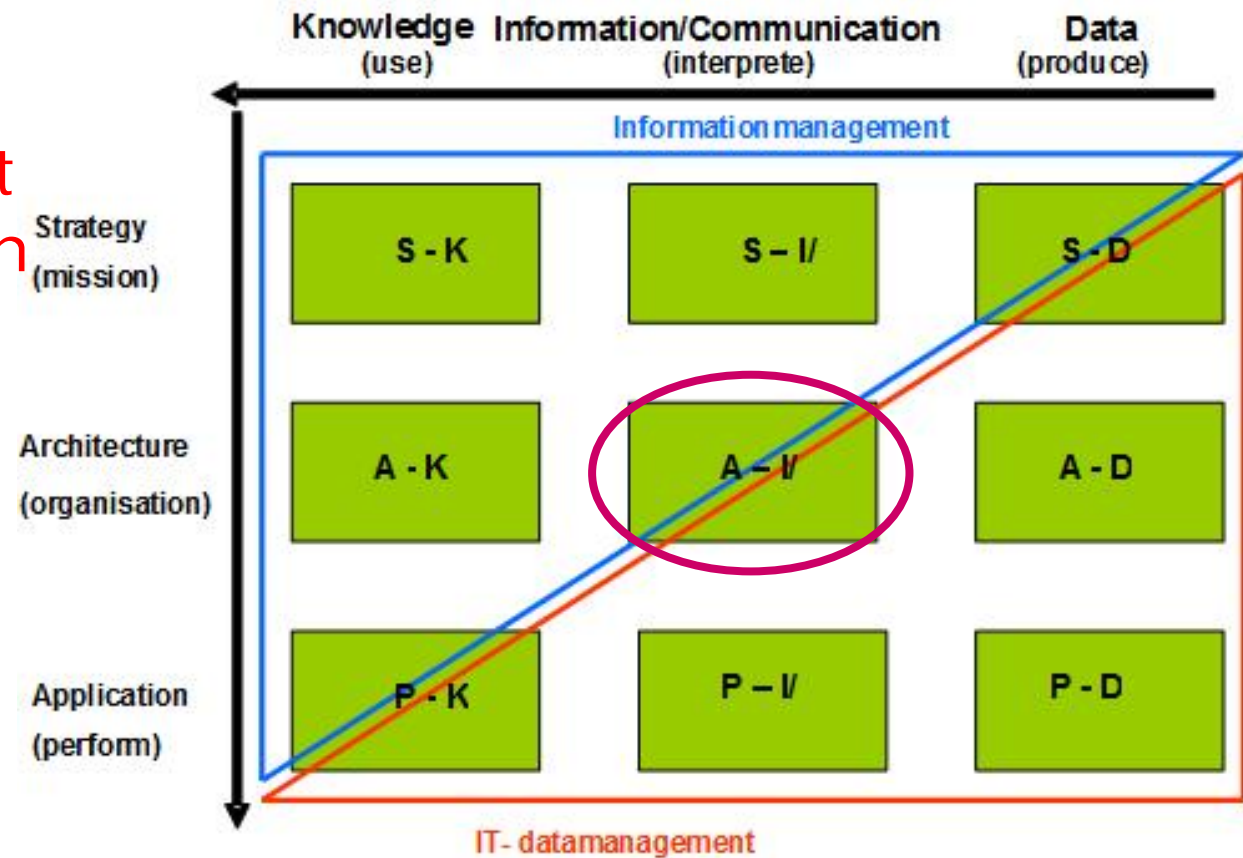The 9 central components of IMM

Step stones

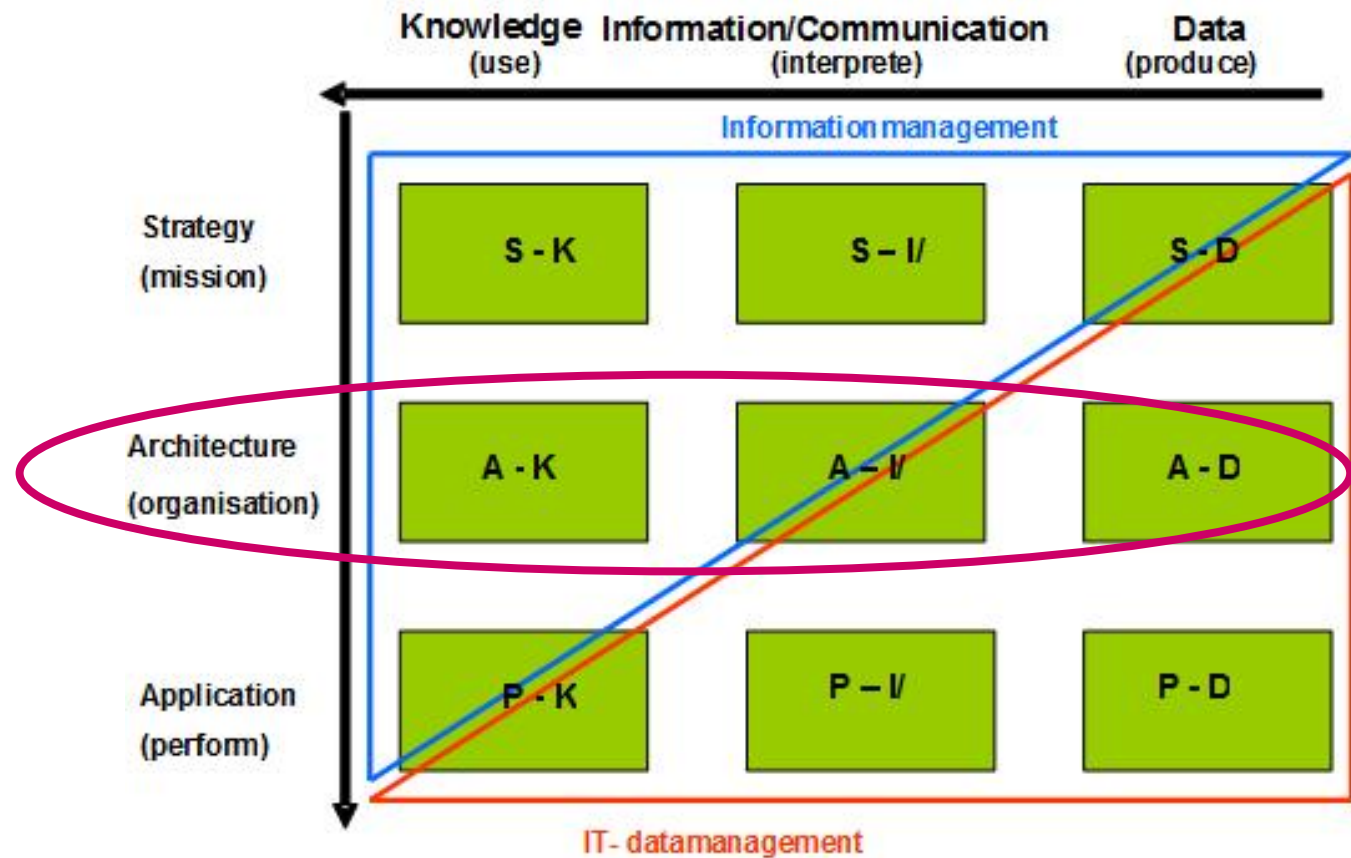### Step 1: Basic IT-skills for inspectors

Step stones

Step 2: IT-applications as an inextricable and natural part of the inspection tasks
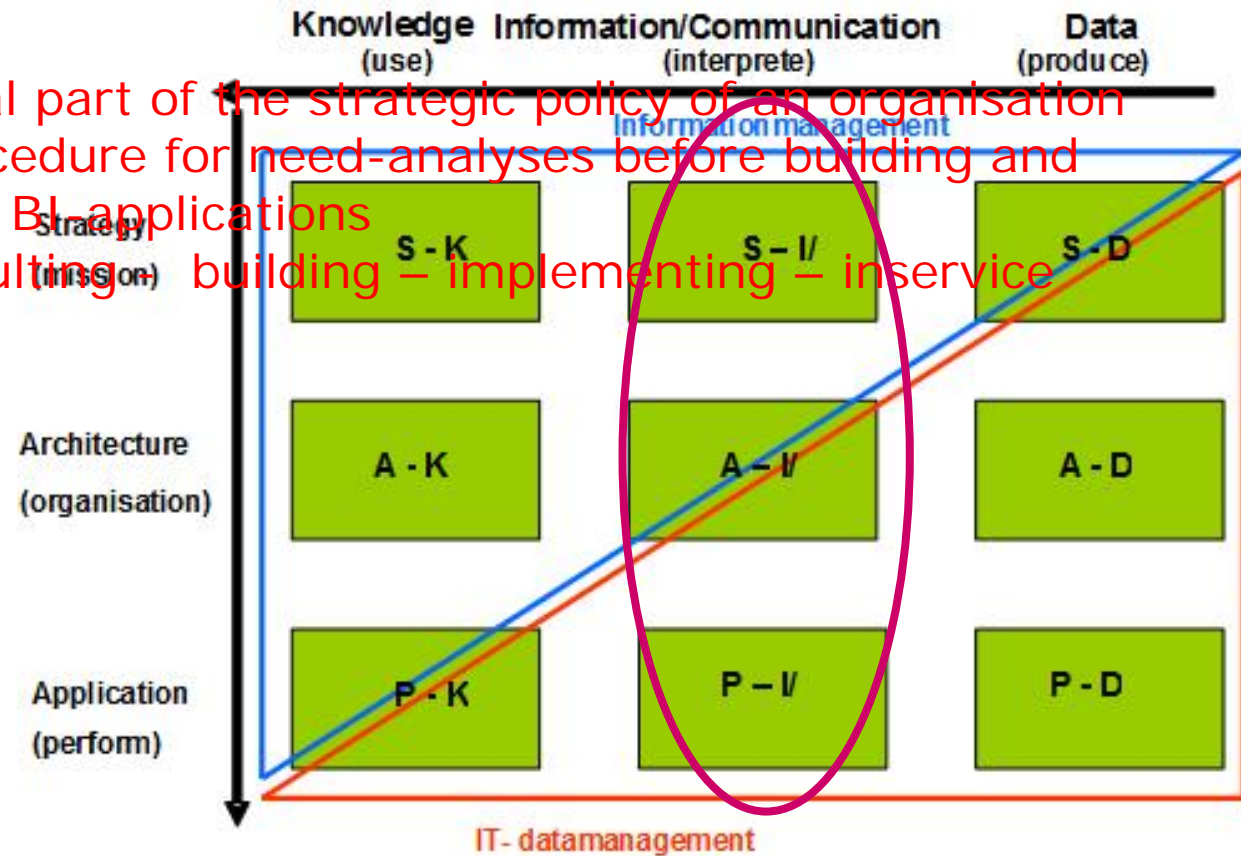
Step stones

Step 3: Introduction of simple BI-applications

Step stones

Step 4: Introduction of basic conditions for IMM

- IT as a natural part of the strategic policy of an organisation
- Time and procedure for need-analyses before building and implementing BI applications
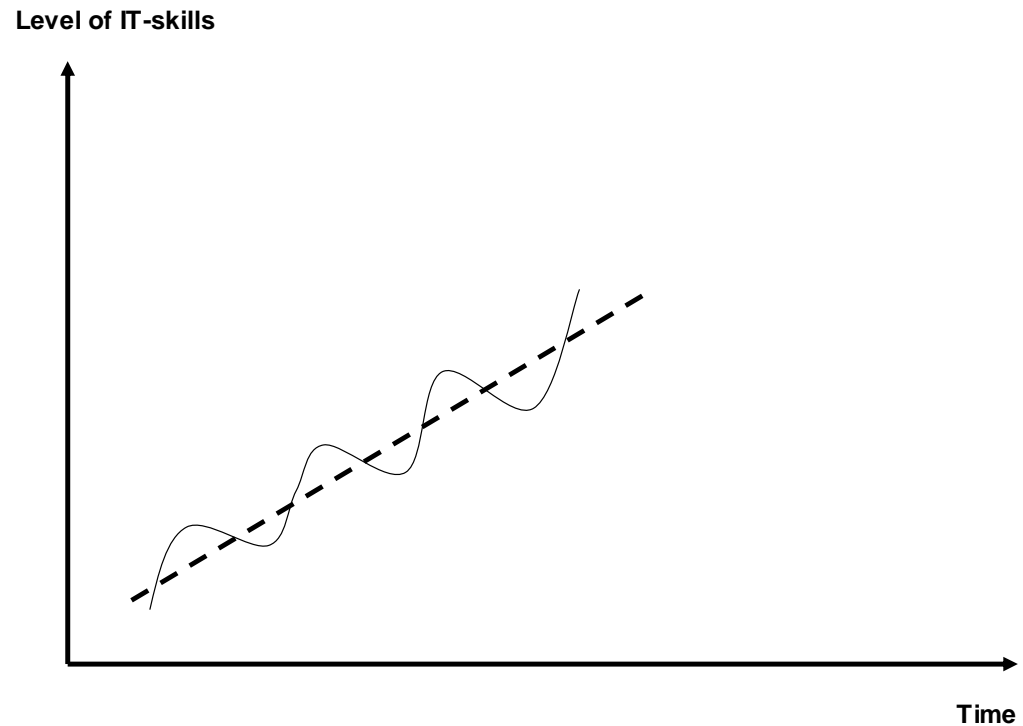- Cycle of consulting – building – implementing – inservice training

And what now?

Hypotheses:
new generation more IT-minded and IT-skilled

- IT-minded: yes
- Basic IT-skilled: yes
- Professional skilled: No

Level of IT-skills

Time

And what now?

Consequence

- **Investigation in support ...**
  - digitalisation stays actual, but less intensive
  - empowerment stays actual, but less intensive
  - the implementation of BI-applications stays actual, but less intensive
  - the introduction of basic conditions for IMM stays actual and **very intensive**

"Deja vue"-syndrome?

And what now?

"Nothing new under the sun!"

Next fragment shows that helpdesks are much older than the actual IT-age.

Thank you for your attention

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