Dear

Final year students majoring in Information Systems within the School of Information Technologies at the University of Sydney are required to take part in an information system project based on a real-life problem. We are seeking your help in suggesting projects involving your organisation, which may be suitable for a group of such students to tackle.

No charge will be made for the work done by students. The work will be carried out between 1 August and 7 October, 2005 by small teams of up to six students. If you collaborate with us on a project, you will receive a set of documentation identifying the problem, outlining a problem solving strategy, a proposed solution to the problem, or a proposed method of attack. In some cases a system design including conceptual data model, and a working prototype as proof of concept will be also available.

A research proposal seeking confirmation of the problem definition and objectives will be presented to you for comment and feedback during the week commencing 22 August. The final report, together with prototype system where applicable, will be presented to you during the week beginning 10 October. If the project includes a prototype system, you will be invited to evaluate this system at the University during that week.

In order to participate in this scheme you will need to make appropriate personnel available for consultation with students during the problem identification and requirements elicitation phase. It is anticipated that this will involve between two and five meetings, normally at your premises. We ask that you specify a ‘contact person’ who can arrange interviews or assistance as required by the students.

Further guidance and help will also be provided by staff at the university, who are allocated to each group and who will supervise the progress and quality of the work undertaken.

We hope that you take this opportunity to join in the training of young people who will help to fill some of the country’s shortfall in information technology professionals, business analysts, systems analysts, system designers, system developers and so on. It may be that some will find their way into your organisation. At the very least we offer you the chance to have a full problem analysis carried out of some of those projects which you would dearly like to undertake but have been left on the ‘back-burner’ from want of resources.

Some suggested characteristics of candidate projects are given on the other side of this sheet and a proposal form included. If you would like to be involved, please fill in the proposal form or have one of our students fill it in for you, and return it to the undersigned by as soon as possible.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Dr. Liaquat Hossain
Unit Coordinator
The University of Sydney Information Systems Project

Characteristics of Suitable Student Projects

Project teams will consist of up to six students and they can be expected each to devote up to 16 hours each week over the period of 10 weeks dedicated to the project.

Projects in the past have covered a wide range of types including:

- mid- or post-implementation audits of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software,
- design and development of solutions to knowledge management problems,
- feasibility analysis and development of a business case for the employment of emerging technology in problem solutions,
- design and implementation of a working prototype solution to a business or information problem.

The following characteristics may help you to identify suitable information system projects in your organisation. Such a project should:

1. **Be useful to your organisation, but not critical**
   It is important that the project be of real importance to you, otherwise we could not expect you to devote time and effort to meeting with students. On the other hand, it should not be too urgent or critical.

2. **Be an ‘information system’ problem**
   This covers a very wide range of possibilities, from identifying broad information needs to implementation of a working prototype. It is anticipated only that the system will involve the capture and storage of data and the production of user specified reports. The range of problems suitable is therefore very wide and if it provides a challenge for the students, so much the better.

3. **Not be too large or complex**
   We suggest that a project which would take an experienced business or systems analyst about six to eight weeks to deal with (working full time at it) would be about the right size (300 person hours). If it is a ‘stand alone’ project, independent of other existing systems the task is simplified, but projects that have to interface to other systems can also be considered.

4. **Have an ‘open’ solution**
   It is best if students cannot immediately see ‘the solution’. In any case they may not ‘tumble’ immediately to the solution which appeals to you and it is beneficial and desirable that they explore a range of solutions before zeroing in on a ‘best’ solution.

5. **Have a specific contact person available.**
   To ensure smooth running it is necessary that a particular person in your organisation be designated the ‘contact person’ and that all dealings with you be through that person. It will be necessary to be able to arrange meetings with appropriate people at reasonably short notice, so that the students’ schedule is not unduly prolonged.

You may like to suggest more than one project, quite unrelated, or a single, larger project which could be factored into sub-projects and undertaken by two or more groups. However, it should be remembered that each project will result in some commitment of time by your people. We anticipate that up to five meetings of two hours duration could be involved for each project.

Enclosed is a proposal form inviting you to specify details of any projects(s) which you feel might be suitable. If you think you have a problem that you would like us to tackle, please fill in the proposal and send it to us as soon as possible.

On receipt of your project proposal(s) we will arrange to meet with you to discuss more fully the scope and objectives of each project. Even if your problem is particularly large or complex it may be possible to factor it into manageable sub-problems and to assign more than one team to it. Students will choose projects at the end of July or early August and they will make further contact with you independently then.

Should your particular project not be chosen we will advise you as soon as that is known.
Name of Organisation: _____________________________________________________

Project Title: ___________________________________________________________

Contact Person: ___________________________ Phone: ______________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________

Brief Description of Project:

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Remarks: _________________________________________________________________

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