

rate vs. other facilities, just log onto your EH&S management information system and look at your dashboard.

As executives and professionals, we need to synthesize information from many different sources, evaluate pluses and minuses, apply judgment, and make decisions. We need time to think.

Just because there's an application, it does not mean that it's necessary or useful. Back in the days of Microsoft's Disk Operating System (DOS) for PCs, there were hundreds of add-on utilities. We have come full circle, with thousands of applications and add-ons available in the marketplace. Using multiple applications and add-ons makes operating systems "buggy" and less secure, more vulnerable to hackers.

Likewise, stretching your EH&S applications over several platforms makes you more susceptible to security issues. It is difficult to find a single application suite that addresses all EH&S issues. Large enterprises often use several EH&S applications, for example, one for safety issues like process hazard

analysis, another to manage material safety data sheets, and one for everything else, from audits and action item tracking to air, water, and waste compliance management.

It does not matter if all of your EH&S information sits within one database. The software end-user does not need to know or care how data are stored, as long as s/he can get the right information, at the right level of detail, with minimal effort, when needed to make timely decisions. Data warehouses and business intelligence (reporting and graphical display) software help make access to information seamless.

There are too many applications for us to learn, and too many places for us to retrieve information. This is a good case for standardizing business processes and centralizing information, so that we have knowledge to make us and our organizations agile. Truly useful information technology focuses on rewards to the end-user. If you cannot make a real-world case that a new technology will improve the productivity of the end-user, than that technology does not add value. **em**