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Structuring the Information Age: Life Insurance and Technology in the Twentieth Century (Hardback)

By Joanne Yates

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS, United States, 2005. Hardback. Condition: New. New.. Language: English . Brand New Book. Structuring the Information Age provides insight into the largely unexplored evolution of information processing in the commercial sector and the underrated influence of corporate users in shaping the history of modern technology. JoAnne Yates examines how life insurance firms-where good record-keeping and repeated use of massive amounts of data were crucial-adopted and shaped information processing technology through most of the twentieth century. The book analyzes this process beginning with tabulating technology, the most immediate predecessor of the computer, and continuing through the 1970s with early computers. Yates elaborates two major themes: the reciprocal influence of information technology and its use, and the influence of past practices on the adoption and use of new technologies. In the 1950s, insurance industry leaders recognized that computers would enable them to integrate processes previously handled separately, but they also understood that they would have to change their ways of working profoundly to achieve this integration. When it came to choosing equipment and applications, most companies ultimately preferred a gradual, incremental migration to an immediate and radical transformation. In tracing this process, Yates shows that IBM s successful...



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