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Author(s)	倉田, 啓一
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Description	Supervisor: 亀岡 秋男, 知識科学研究科, 修士

Analysis of Success Factors in Standardization of the TRON Project

Keiichi Kurata

School of Knowledge Science,
Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

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This paper is a case study about standardization of a TRON project.

The TRON project is going to decide upon computer OS specification unique to Japan, and is going to realize "Dokodemo Computer" (called ubiquitous computing) environment. This is an industry-university cooperation project and Professor University of Tokyo Ken Sakamura is a project leader. This project is started from the 80s and, even now, is continued.

The TRON project is divided into some sub projects. They are BTRON, CTRON, ITRON, etc. Generally, it is said ITRON is successful and that BTRON went wrong. However, distinction of a success or failure is defined below. It is whether the result of each sub project serves as a standard in the market. Generally, it is said that BTRON failed in the external pressure by the U.S.A. And it hardly inquires about the other factor.

The purpose of this research made the comparative analysis of the BTRON to CTRON and ITRON, and aimed at extracting success / failure factor of the TRON project. Factors are examined from a technical, economical, and political viewpoint.

Therefore, the circumstances of a project were investigated and a related interview from people was held. And it analyzed from the circumstances of the relation between companies, specification creation, and market formation etc. based on the data obtained from there. Consequently,

especially BTRON had the following features. It had become a situation like the bubble that only expectation swells without forming that specification decision and market formation have dissociated, i.e., a market. Such inside, by the external pressure from the U.S. having happened, it was influenced greatly and it went wrong.

From the above analysis, following four were drawn as success / failure factors in standardization of TRON.

- (1) Existence of an alternative technology
- (2) Competition or cooperation relationship of a company
- (3) The existence and the method of management of the external pressure
- (4) Time of specification decision and market formation

These four factors are involved mutually and considered to have opted for a success and failure.

The TRON project had a unique situation also socially of Japan-U.S. trade friction. For the reason, it may be difficult to generalize this example simply. Therefore, future research is desired.