



How difficult is it to upgrade ERP software?

It's extremely difficult, unless you are one of the rare companies that did not tinker with the system while installing it. In the early days of ERP, vendors pursued a vision that has since been disproved: Business processes built into the software should be adopted by every customer. Change your business to fit the system. CEOs like the sound of reengineering, but take that logic to the departmental head that won't be able to serve her customers as well with the process in the software box and suddenly reengineering sounds less compelling. CEOs were forced to tinker with the innards of these packages to avoid losing valuable chunks of business processes, and it made their lives hell. Vendors ignored this reality for years. They thought changing the system to fit your own processes meant you were a weak girly man who couldn't stand up to your business people. Those processes couldn't be any good anyway if they hadn't made it into the vendors' best practice pool when they developed the stuff. Modifying the core code of ERP was like turning your Pinto into a low rider. Sometimes vendors begin breaking up and componentizing their suites to make them easier to integrate with each other and with legacy systems inside the company, they also broke up one of the value propositions that had been so enticing in the first place: "free" upgrades.