Business technology strategies are necessary to optimize investments in technology on behalf of the business. But the methods, tools and techniques necessary to develop effective strategies are fragmented. At the same time, the need for cost-effective strategies has never been greater: the current economic crisis requires companies to acquire, deploy and support technology carefully and strategically.

This special issue of the Journal of Information Technology Research describes an approach to the development of business technology strategies; it also presents a set of real strategies from companies across several vertical industries. The special issue is practical yet grounded in strategic planning methodology.

There are five papers in this special issue. The first paper presents a set of business technology strategy templates used to educate students about the components of business technology strategies and how strategies can be developed with “lite” or “heavy” templates.

The next paper presents the business technology strategy for a special chemicals company – SpeChem. The lesson here is that once computing and communications infrastructure – operational technology – is organized and measured, companies can turn to strategic technology where impact is measured around customers, revenue, up-selling and cross-selling. SpeChem “solved” the operational technology problem and is investing in strategic technology opportunities.

Entel is an energy research company that’s transforming itself to take greater advantage of newer technologies – especially Web 2.0, content management and social media technologies. The strategy identifies a set of steps that should be taken, steps that are assessed in terms of their risk. The value of this strategy is its embedded SWOT (strength/weakness/opportunity/threat) analysis of each recommendation.

The next strategy is from a real estate and mortgage brokerage company. The company needs to transform its approach to the acquisition, deployment and support of technology, especially how it sources technology. A multi-year plan is developed that will take the company’s relationship with technology to the next level.

Finally, the energy industry is – like the real estate industry – in turmoil. Regional transmission organizations (RTOs) have to manage the distribution of electric power reliably and securely. EnDis distributes electricity to a large geographic region. Its technology strategy reflects its emphasis on reliability, security and agility.

All of the papers demonstrate the importance of aligning business strategy with technology strategy. They also represent diversity: they’re all from different vertical
industries. Taken together, they demonstrate and educate – and underscore the importance of detailed business technology strategies.

Stephen J. Andriole
Guest Editor
JITR

Stephen J. Andriole is the Thomas G. Labrecque Professor of Business Technology in Villanova University’s School of Business (www.villanova.edu). He is also a Fellow in the Cutter Consortium (www.cutter.com). He is the co-founder of The Acentio Group (www.acentio.com), a group of business technology veterans that focus on optimizing investments in information technology. He is formerly the Senior Vice President & Chief Technology Officer of Safeguard Sciences, Inc. and the Chief Technology Officer and Senior Vice President for Technology Strategy at CIGNA Corporation. His career began at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) where he was the Director of Cybernetics Technology.