Editorial Preface

Cases on Information Technology

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Journal of Cases on Information Technology

More and more educators and researchers are discovering that case studies are excellent ways of sharing insight into successful implementation of information technology. Providing real-life situations for students and professionals alike, case studies describe the successes and pitfalls of those who have utilized these technologies in real-life settings.

In this issue of JCIT, IT researchers and professionals from around the world have recorded the successes and failures of real-life situations revolving around IT implementation in modern organizations in case studies. The individuals involved, steps taken in IT adoption, and outcomes differ in each situation and bring to life multiple problems and solutions. These cases cover a variety of IT ventures, including a nonprofit organization, IS and the auto industry, rebuilding after an IT disaster, a software vendor selection process, development of a university’s enterprise system, using an assessment tool for IT-business strategic alignment, and cross-cultural issues with IS implementation. Only real-life situations such as those included in this issue can act as excellent discussion facilitators in the classroom, and professors and students alike will certainly find much to discuss and debate within each scenario. IT managers and researchers can also learn from these situations involving IT and come away with tips on how to promote IT adoption or stay clear of failure. Following are summaries of the cases contained in this issue.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Algos Center: Information Systems in a Small Non-Profit Organization, by Susan J. Chinn, Charlotte A. Pryor, and John J. Voyer (University of Southern Maine, USA) is a case study describing an analysis of information systems conducted for a small nonprofit organization. The case highlights many of the problems facing small nonprofits and allows readers to supply possible courses of action. In addition, it provides an opportunity to evaluate how a consulting experience was handled.

Automotive Industry Information Systems: From Mass Production to Build-to-Order, by Mickey Howard, Philip Powell, and Richard Vidgen (University of Bath, UK) is the next case. Building cars to customer order has been the goal of vehicle manufacturers since the birth of mass production. Despite recent advances in information technology offering total visibility and real-time information flow, transforming a high volume manufacturing industry to adopt customer responsiveness and build-to-order represents a significant step. This case explores the barriers to change within and between stakeholders at all levels of the supply chain.

Up in Smoke: Rebuilding After an IT Disaster is authored by Steven C. Ross, Craig K. Tyran, David J. Auer, Jon M. Junell, and Terrell G. Williams (Western Washington University, USA). A college of business computer server room was completely destroyed by a fire. This case discusses the issues the college faced as they planned for rebuilding their information technology operations. The reader is challenged to learn from this experience and develop an IT architecture that will meet operational requirements and take into account the potential threats to the system.
A Case of Information Systems Pre-Implementation Failure: Pitfalls of Overlooking the Key Stakeholders’ Interests, by Christoph Schneider and Suprateek Sarker (Washington State University, USA), focuses on the software vendor selection process at a large public university which failed even before implementation could get under way, as the managers in charge of the project overlooked procedures as outlined in the RFP and the roles of relevant but “hidden” decision makers during the pre-implementation stage of the project.

End-User System Development: Lessons from a Case Study of IT Usage in an Engineering Organization, by Murray E. Jennex (San Diego State University, USA), looks at a study of end user computing within the engineering organizations of an electric utility undergoing deregulation. The case was initiated when management perceived that too much engineering time was spent doing IS functions. The case found that there was significant effort being expended on system development, support, and ad hoc use. Several issues were identified affecting system development including use of programming standards, documentation, infrastructure integration, and system support.

The next case, Enterprise System Development in Higher Education, is authored by Bongsug Chae (Kansas State University, USA) and Marshall Scott Poole (Texas A&M University, USA). This case study describes a major U.S. university system’s experience in the development of an in-house enterprise system. This case indicates that ES design and implementation in higher education is challenging and complex due to unique factors in the public sector. It offers some unique opportunities to discuss issues, challenges and potential solutions for the deployment of ES in the public arena, particularly in higher education.

IT-Business Strategic Alignment Maturity: A Case Study, is authored by Deb Sledgianowski, Hofstra University (USA) and Jerry Luftman, Stevens Institute of Technology (USA) and describes the use of an assessment tool that can help to promote long-term IT-business strategic alignment. The Strategic Alignment Maturity (SAM) assessment is used as a framework to demonstrate the improvement of an international specialty chemicals manufacturer’s IT-business alignment practices to achieve their corporate goals. Major insights from their experience and SAM best practices are highlighted.

Cross-Cultural Implementation of Information System is authored by Wai K. Law and Karri Perez (University of Guam, Guam). An international service conglomerate recently developed a strategic information system to enhance its service delivery and strategic adaptation. A routine implementation of an information subsystem at a newly acquired subsidiary ended with shocking failure. Cultural ignorance doomed the information system project delivered by a seasoned system development team.

Every circumstance revolving around information technology, whether successful or unsuccessful, helps the users learn a little bit more about the resources at their fingertips. When their stories are shared, IT managers and students are able to learn from the experiences of others and implement those guidelines into their own use of IT. We hope that the cases included in this issue of the Journal of Cases on Information Technology will be instrumental to IT researchers, professionals, policy makers, teachers, and students. Your feedback and comments, as always, will be greatly appreciated.

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