Foreword

The emergence and rapid growth in digital technologies, particularly over the past twenty years, have led to greater concentration within industries, performance differentiation within industries, and market turbulence (McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2008). Digital Technologies (DT) have fundamentally changed the competitive landscape and will continue to do so. This is the landscape in which an organization lives and moves as it strives to survive, while staying true to its mission. The unceasing DT innovations disrupt environments, presenting both daunting challenges and unprecedented opportunities for the organizations that inhabit them. Relative to the industry in which it operates, such disruption results in an organization being more or less productive, more or less agile, more or less innovative, and more or less reputable than its competitors. Mastery of DT, including cleverly applying it, is one key to an organization’s quest for not only survival in a hypercompetitive world, but also sustained excellence.

Here, we have a book that is a substantial contribution to cutting-edge mastery of DT. Digital Product Management, Technology, and Practice: Interdisciplinary Perspectives offers a state-of-the-art treatment of digital technologies. This well-organized, clearly written book is packed with information and insights for researchers, practitioners, educators, students, and vendors – not only in the DT field, but also relevant to such topic areas as competition strategies, knowledge management, process management, and organizational networking. Its coverage ranges from what digital technologies are and encompass, to how DT work, to identification and resolution of emergent DT issues that need to be resolved, to DT applications, to new directions for DT management.

There is a particular emphasis on digital products, including both goods and services. The digital goods are comprised of knowledge representations that a processor (human or computer-based) regards as being useful. The digital services are computer-based actions performed at the request of, or on behalf of, a client processor (human or computer-based). Digital products flesh out an ever more pervasive virtual world that shadows our actual world. In some dimensions, this virtual world is replacing facets of the actual world. In other ways, digital products complement the actual world. In some cases, the digital product is quite novel in the sense of having no actual world counterpart. This book helps us understand nature, scope, and prospects the world of digital products enabled by DT.

The DT issues explored include societal (e.g., environment effects on use of DT and vice versa), legal/ethical (e.g., consumer and producer rights), financial (e.g., financing and accounting for digital products), and marketing (e.g., product pricing) issues. Resolving such issues is of great practical importance for effectively harnessing the potential of digital products. The book considers a nice variety of DT applications that illustrates the richness of digital product possibilities. These range from news delivery to software delivery to service delivery systems. The book also addresses management topics such as limitation of DT, strategies for using DT, digital convergence, leveraging social media to enhance digital product success, and creating value via digital products.
In my first read of the book, I was repeatedly struck by the way in which its content aligns with principles of Knowledge Management (KM) and concepts in the fledgling Science of Competitiveness (SoC). In perusing the book’s content, I found chapter after chapter provoking new and interesting questions about linkages between knowledge management and DT (Holsapple, 2005). Moreover, I found multiple chapters of high relevance to further developing the SoC, within which DT form an integral component (Holsapple & Jin, 2007). Within the SoC, DT foster the convergence of an organization’s knowledge, networks, and processors for undertaking advantageous competitive moves within a turbulent environment. Thus, I recommend the book not only to those interested in DT advances in general, and digital products in particular, but also to those interested in pushing forward KM and SoC research and practice.

In all, Digital Product Management, Technology, and Practice is a welcome and unique addition to the scholarly literature – furnishing timely coverage of an important phenomenon that is an essential ingredient for business success.

REFERENCES


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