

Preface

Information management has many facets, and the emerging world of electronic business and virtual communities makes the tasks associated with effective information management even more complex. From knowledge management to virtual teams and from IT investments to organizational mission statements, business executives, IT practitioners, researchers, teachers and students need to have access to the most current information surrounding the research and practice of information resources management. The chapters offer the most current theory and practice in IT research and management. These chapters, all written by experts in their respective fields offer concrete suggestions for managers and individuals who want to get the most from their IT investments, secure their privacy on the Internet and effectively manage their knowledge resources. For the academics and researchers, these chapters offer novel theory of evaluating information systems. From postmodernism to Chaos Theory, these chapters are designed to provoke thoughtful discussion and novel research paradigms.

Chapter I, entitled “Aligning IS Research and Practice: A Research Agenda for Virtual Work,” by France Bélanger, Mary Beth Watson-Manheim and Diane H. Jordan, explores the emerging area of virtual work. This chapter develops a new and broader research agenda that accounts for emerging issues and concerns of practitioners, existing published work and interdisciplinary perspectives in the area of virtual work. The authors of this chapter offer an intriguing discussion of the emerging trends in virtual work and the necessary supporting technologies.

Chapter II, entitled “The Societal Impact of the World Wide Web — Key Challenges for the 21st Century,” by Janice M. Burn and Karen D. Loch, addresses the impact of information technology and the World Wide Web on the 21st century and the challenges that responsible members of a dynamically changing society face in light of these new technologies. The authors argue that organizational, sociological and cultural factors may inhibit an effective transformation to a global information society and pay particular attention to the policies, infrastructure, human resources and development responsibilities in developing countries.

Chapter III, entitled “Internet Privacy: Interpreting Key Issues” by Gurpreet S. Dhillon and Trevor T. Moores, identifies issues related to maximizing Internet

privacy. This chapter describes the notion of Internet privacy and offers various researchers' definitions of it. The authors then describe their research, which sought to define the major Internet privacy concerns. The chapter presents five major areas of concern, and the authors offer the recommendations for ensuring privacy in the Internet age.

Chapter IV, entitled "Knowledge Management Enablers within an IT Department," by Hope Koch, David Paradice, Yi Guo and Bongsug Chae, presents a case study of knowledge management efforts within an information technology environment. The case study is based on technical and human-centric approaches combined with Holsapple and Joshi's Kentucky Initiative. Based upon the case study presented, the authors propose a model of execution of knowledge manipulation activities and a model outlining factors enabling effective knowledge management.

Chapter V, entitled "E-mail's Value: Internal versus External Usage," by Denise J. McManus, Chetan S. Sankar, Houston H. Carr and F. Nelson Ford, provides a new perspective on the competitive advantage of electronic mail within organizations. This chapter investigates the relationship between the strategic uses and competitive benefits of electronic mail in modern organizations. The results suggest that e-mail usage could augment the competitive posture of the firm.

Chapter VI, entitled "The Value of Managerial Flexibility in Strategic IT Investment: Identify the Real Options of Resource Allocation," by Xiaotong Li and John D. Johnson, discusses the real options theory and its application to IT investment evaluation. The authors provide a framework that systematically justifies using real options theory in Strategic IT investment evaluation. The authors discuss an electronic brokerage's investment decision in wireless technology as a real-world application of the proposed framework.

Chapter VII, entitled "Trust and Technology in Virtual Teams," by Steven A. Morris, Thomas E. Marshall and R. Kelly Rainer, Jr., investigates the impacts that reliance on information technology and trust have on job satisfaction of virtual team members. The study presented in the chapter reveals that both user satisfaction and trust are positively related to job satisfaction in virtual teams, while system use was not found to play a significant role.

Chapter VIII, entitled "An Architecture for Active and Passive Knowledge Management Systems," by Stuart D. Galup, Ronald Dattero and Richard C. Hicks, discusses the importance of utilizing a knowledge management system which allows for knowledge management activities that utilize both active and passive knowledge. This chapter develops and justifies a proposed client/server architecture to build a manageable active knowledge management system that uses digital forms of both active and passive knowledge.

Chapter IX, entitled “Social Issues in Electronic Commerce: Implications for Policy Makers,” by Anastasia Papazafeiropoulou and Athanasia Pouloudi, examines how social concerns such as trust and digital democracy pertain to all levels of Internet and electronic commerce policy. The authors then discuss dilemmas facing and influencing the development and construction of an effective and socially responsible strategy for electronic commerce.

Chapter X, entitled “Information Technology Outsourcing in Australia,” by Nicholas Beaumont and Christina Costa, reports a research project investigating the incidence of outsourcing among Australian firms. The authors conclude that the three most important factors for driving outsourcing in Australia are access to skills, improved service quality and increasing managers’ ability to focus on core business activities. The chapter concludes by offering suggestions for successful outsourcing partnerships.

Chapter XI, entitled “Exploring the Influence of Rewards on Attitudes Towards Knowledge Sharing,” by Gee Woo (Gilbert) Bock and Young-Gul Kim, describes the results of a study that examines and tests factors expected to affect an individual’s knowledge-sharing attitudes, intentions and behaviors in an organizational context. The chapter discusses the major detriments towards knowledge sharing and the influence of a positive attitude towards knowledge-sharing behaviors.

Chapter XII, entitled “Intentions to Use Groupware: The Influence of Users’ Perceptions,” by Craig Van Slyke, Hao Lou and John Day, presents the results of a study using diffusion of innovation theory to investigate the factors that influence intentions to use a specific groupware application, Lotus Domino discussion database. The authors offer suggestions for positively impacting users’ perceptions and increasing the use of groupware applications.

Chapter XIII, entitled “The Influences of the Degree of Interactivity on User-Outcomes in a Multimedia Environment: An Empirical Investigation,” by William D. Haseman, Vichuda Nui Polatoglu and K. Ramamurthy, investigates the influence of interactivity on the learning outcomes of users in a multimedia systems environment. The results of the study discussed indicate that while interactivity does not necessarily enable a gain in user learning, it does positively influence participants’ attitudes. The study further demonstrates that there are no moderating effects of learning styles, as measured by Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory scale, on the relationship between interactivity and user outcomes.

Chapter XIV, entitled “On the Role of Human Morality in Information System Security: From the Problems of Descriptivism to Non-Descriptive Foundations,” by Mikko T. Siponen, proposes that the use of ethical theories and human morality is useful for security, and further argues that descriptivism, including cultural relativism, leads to several problems and contradictions, and causes detri-

mental effects to well-being and security. The authors propose an alternative approach to using ethics that is based upon non-descriptive theories.

Chapter XV, entitled “Chaos Theory as a Framework for Studying Information Systems,” by Gurpreet S. Dhillon and John Ward, introduces Chaos Theory as a means of studying information systems. The chapter argues that new techniques, derived from Chaos Theory and used for discovering patterns in complex quantitative and qualitative evidence, offers a more sustentative approach to understand the nature of information systems.

Chapter XVI, entitled “Organizational Mission Statements: A Postmodernist Perspective on the Management of an IS/IT Function,” by John Pillay and Ray Hackney, examines postmodernism in the context of organizational mission statements and forms a critique of modernist approaches and proposes alternative views about philosophy, organizational management theory and IS/IT management theory. The authors conclude that the modernist/postmodernist dialectic is a productive discussion, which positively contributes to IT research in terms of analytical techniques and interpretive strategies.

Effective and efficient management of information and knowledge resources is priority for organizations of all types and sizes, and for individuals. The increasing importance of the virtual world is revolutionizing the way businesses and organizations relate to each other. In order to be successful in this technological world, organizations, researchers, teachers, students and individuals must have access to the most current research into the theory and practice of information management. Academics and researchers will find the research proposed an excellent starting point for discussions and springboard for their own research. Practitioners and business people will find concrete advice on how to maximize their IT investments, their knowledge management initiatives and their training programs. This timely new book is a must-read for anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of how to successfully manage and improve their valuable technology and information resources.

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