

EDITORIAL PREFACE**Organizational Processes
and Strategy:
Vital Technologies**

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As reflected in this issue, organizations are increasingly using information and communication technology to enhance their processes and strategy. Virtual communications, collaborations, alliances, business intelligence, and knowledge management are becoming critical for organizational success along with the underlying information technology investments and security. Through articles describing critical concepts and empirical support, the issue describes recommendations for intelligent use of knowledge and information, virtual collaboration, organizational alliances, knowledge management strategy, holistic supply chain management, information technology investment, and security.

The issue begins with an article by Donate, Guadamillas, and Sánchez de Pablo focusing on the creation of suitable Knowledge Management Strategy (KMS) for managing organizational knowledge in alliances where language is developed, shared, and acquired among partners. The article presents a case study of a technology intensive company and describes the importance of designing suitable KMS in terms of knowledge management tools, support systems, and objectives and goals. The article describes how the company is developing different businesses

in technological settings, providing conclusions on aspects of KMS implementation to attain company goals and objectives.

The focus on the importance of alliances in organizational strategy is continued by Saban, who proposes and describes the benefits of a holistic approach to supply chain management. Instead of focusing on having the latest collaboration technology, Saban presents an approach based on current studies which highlight the importance to supply chain performance of human collaboration. Saban continues with descriptions of the advantages of employing a holistic supply chain approach and clarifies the forces that facilitate human collaboration and economic benefits of the approach.

The paramount role of information and knowledge sharing is also emphasized by Baporikar, who argues for adoption of academic strategies to ensure the quality of distance education. The article discusses the potential of education to the welfare of both developing and developed economies. Because of this importance of education and proliferation of online learning worldwide, Baporikar argues that quality distance education is key and builds a case for setting standards and holistic development.

To facility understanding of the common barriers faced by the organizations in provisioning enterprise-level Business Intelligence services, Mendoza provides the resulting data from four companies based on interviews about the status of their BI activities. Mendoza describes how BI is aimed at using data analysis as a competitive weapon and so should be deeply integrated into business processes. The paper presents findings from research on four architecture phases with increasingly greater complexity and service capabilities. The paper provides specific information on one firm with limited scope operational along with the role of XML, or semantic data exchange technologies and discusses the importance of IT Investment to BI.

The issue ends with a focus on the security concerns related to virtualization, investment, and information technology. Shebanow, Perez, and Howard describe the importance of un-

derstanding the nature of threats to a system so that specific defense mechanisms can be implemented. The authors describe how globally scattered network systems and on-demand access to systems such as cloud computing require a high level of security, because the software and hardware of networks are integrated in vulnerable shared or outsourced environments. The paper describes how threats can be reduced through understanding of the threats and explores how use, misuse, positive and negative, obstacle, and abuse testing cases of firewalls have broadened the security policies that mitigate or prevent threats in a cloud environment.

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Caroline Howard (PhD) is an author, editor, consultant, and educator. She has published a number of articles on technology and learning. Her books include the first and 2nd editions of the Encyclopedia of Distance Learning (2005 and 2009), Winning the Net Game: Becoming Profitable Now that the Web Rules have Changed (Entrepreneur Press, 2002), The Design and Management of Effective Distance Learning Programs (2002), and Distance Learning and University Effectiveness: Changing Educational Paradigms for Online Learning (2005). Caroline holds an MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in management information systems from the University of California - Irvine where she received honors for her teaching and research.