I’d like to share with you some thoughts about where the information systems field is going in the next decade. I think it is a highly auspicious time that the 1990s inaugurated this series of events for IRMA. The first 25 years in the field were heavily involved in building corporate infrastructure and databases and automating basic transaction systems. With the 1980s, a very different perspectives came to the field. For the first time, we began to see very clearly and visibly, competitive uses of information technology. Much of the discussion in the 1980s focused on electronic data interchange, interorganization information systems, airline reservation systems, and other distribution systems.

Largely unnoticed until the last three or four years has been the genuine revolution that has been going on in corporate infrastructure and control.

The landmark article in our field on infrastructure appeared in the *Harvard Business Review* in 1958 written by two assistant professors at the University of Chicago Business School entitled, “Management in the 1980s.” It was a very visionary piece which suggested how this technology would change organization structure, control processes, and the very life of the firm from within.

A decade after that article was published, there was no evidence of any of this happening. A whole group of academics, including myself, picked this article up as an example of the kind of fuzzy-minded thinking that came from academics who have never dealt with the real world. We were wrong! Everything in that article has come to pass with an absolute vengeance in the past five years and it will be the dominant theme of the next decade. In retrospect, there were only two flaws in that article.

The first flaw I believe to be forgivable. The other flaw represents the dominant problem that the practitioner world will be fighting for the rest of this century. The forgivable one is the amount of technology that would be required to execute these concepts. Given that the article was written in ’58, it is understandable that it missed by several orders of magnitude the needed technology. The second flaw was that they gave no thought to the extraordinary problems and challenges of executing the management changes implied in their article. These implementation problems dominate the field today. Now we are systematically ripping apart psychological contracts, corporate cultures, and ways of operating, which often have been in existence for thirty or forty years. This is hard! Indeed, about 15% of the effort today is involved in figuring out what to do; making it happen is 85% or more of the action.

In 1991, we have a large number of vivid examples of how this technology has already completely changed the corporate infrastructure.

At Harvard, we have dealt with this in our academic program by going through a major reorganization of our teaching programs. Under the leadership of the MIS faculty, we have brought together significant portions of our schools’ Organization Behavior faculty, and of its Management Control faculty. We believe that the dominant action today lies in the interaction of organization behavior, management control, and information systems and we have put our money where our mouth was a year ago, and we reorganized the school’s educational offerings to deal with this reality.

One of the four very long courses, which now runs through our entire first year MBA program, required of every student, is called Information, Organization and Control. We did not do this lightly. It was a considered judgment of our 200-member faculty that this set of problems would so consume the attention of our graduates for the next decade that we had to deploy our resources and our hiring patterns to deal with this reality.

**Organizational Structure.** One is the ability to totally transform where decisions are being made in the company. The theme is not that this technology leads to either centralization or de-centralization. Rather what the
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