



BOOK REVIEW

Information Technology: Strategic Decision Making for Managers

Henry C. Lucas, Jr.

Published by Wiley, Hoboken (NJ), 2005, 646pp, ISBN 0-471-65293-8

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European Journal of Information Systems
(2006) 15, 109–110.
doi:10.1057/palgrave.ejis.3000550

Information Systems is currently not a popular topic in many MBA's. If we can talk about an MBA fashion cycle then information systems is definitely still on its downturn. This is probably in a sharp contrast with how we – IS Professionals and academics – experience the importance of our field ourselves. We still experience a significant growth in the importance of our field in every respect and, consequently, the question becomes, how do we explain this to a patient who is in denial? Henry Lucas's new book could be of excellent help for that.

For a long time information systems professionals could get away with additional funding simply by stating that they were very important. However, the many failures absorbed most of our credit and there is an increasing pressure on IT budgets. In many organizations, the IT department is currently also the place where you can harvest the highest cost reductions.

Our toolset to realise the above improvements is not very well-established. Although, most of us know, for example, the value chain, it is less clear, however, this technique should be included in an IT strategy? Henry Lucas has now written an excellent course book for this and more. The book contains 21 chapters/446 pages that provide an in-depth business perspective to informative technology.

The first 12 chapters follow the information system life cycle, from thinking about sustainable strategic advantage to the legacy environment. These chapters include ample discussion about new business models and IT decision making. The business perspective to legacy systems is a welcome new perspective.

Chapters 13–15 discuss three basic components of information systems, being: computer systems, databases and networking. Chapters 16–21 then discuss a various range of (important) topics. Chapter 16 discusses a wide range of contemporary issues in electronic commerce. Chapter 17 discusses ERP and CRM systems. Chapter 18 is about decision support systems and expert systems and is a good introduction to chapter 19 about knowledge management and the fourth basic component of information systems being people. Chapter 20 and 21 discuss the digital divide and ethical issues.

Is there nothing to quibble about? Of course, there always is. Compared to other books the first 12 chapters are truly a step forwards. This makes the book suitable for more advanced IS courses. However, the chapters on the basic components of information systems are of an elementary level. Presumably this is done to make this book also suitable for introductory IS courses, where students lack any IS background. However, creating something multi-functional is always dangerous, because you might end up with something that is not truly useful for any of its purposes. Most European business schools will choose to first have a more profound

introduction to the basic notions and components of information systems and then elaborate upon the strategic use of this technology.

In our business school, we are however, convinced of this book's business quality and we will use the book as

mandatory reading in our secondary 5 ECTS information systems course. We are convinced that this book provides an excellent hands-on introduction to the many business possibilities of information systems and truly recommend this book.