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Jaeki Song
Texas Tech University

Jeff Baker
Texas Tech University

Minwoo Lee
Texas Tech University

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EXPLORING CEOS PERSPECTIVES ON THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF IT USING TEXT MINING: A LONGITUDINAL INVESTIGATION

Jeff Baker, Jaeki Song, Min Woo Lee
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX
<jeff.baker, jaeki.song, minwoo.lee>@ttu.edu

Abstract

Recent commentary has indicated that the strategic importance of IT may be waning. To explore this issue, we investigate CEOs' perspectives on the strategic importance of IT over time by analyzing their Letters to Shareholders from corporate annual reports. We use text mining to examine a sample of 180 annual reports from Fortune 1000 companies in the commercial banking industry from the period 1997 to 2005. The primary intended contribution of this study is to demonstrate ways in which text mining may be used to investigate the issue of whether IT remains strategically important. We argue that text mining need not be dismissed as a tool of data-driven research, but instead that text mining can be utilized in theoretically-grounded confirmatory research. We demonstrate types of analyses that may be performed to address the question of whether IT remains a component of organizational strategy and present preliminary findings of our research.

Keywords: CEOs, senior management, annual reports, text mining, IT commoditization, longitudinal data, organizational performance