

December 2004

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Recommended Citation

Beise, Catherine; Collins, Rosann; Niederman, Fred; Quan, Jim; and Moody, Janette, "Global Information Systems Management: What is it and How Should We Teach it?" (2004). *AMCIS 2004 Proceedings*. 346.
<http://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2004/346>

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Global Information Systems Management: What is it and How Should We Teach it?

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ABSTRACT

Business enterprises continue to globalize, motivated by their continued search for new markets, greater efficiency in the use of resources, and greater competitiveness. Information Technology serves as one of the critical success factors for making this possible. A number of IS programs are delivering courses in Global IS Management as electives or requirements. To what extent should IS curricula include such coursework, given the continued growth of globalization?

Keywords:

Global IS, IS Education

SUMMARY

Each of the panelists has experience in teaching or developing Global IS books, courses, labs, and/or curricula. The panelists will address and discuss some or all of the following questions. We plan this panel to be highly interactive, both between the panelists and with the audience. In particular, the panelists will work together prior to the conference to provide position papers which will be handed out to the audience and briefly presented. They will also each create an initial set of answers to questions 2-5, and then at the conference will ask the panel audience to complete a brief survey. The panelists will use the survey results as the basis for discussion with the audience to add additional ideas, identify those topics that are most important to include, and elaborate on both new and initial answers. The outcome of the panel discussion will be posted to ISWorld.

- 1) *Should Global IS Management be a separate course, or should the junior-level MIS course change its focus to Global IS, or should we leave/assume coverage of Global IS to international business courses or to E-Business courses? What are the key factors in our university settings that will influence how this topic will be addressed (a separate course, required or elective, level and prerequisites)?*
- 2) *If a separate course, what should the components of such a course be? To what extent should each of the following topics be included (if at all):*
 - a. General concepts of International Business: geography, culture, politics, economics, finance, trade
 - b. E-Business
 - c. Global Supply Chain Management
 - d. IT Infrastructure
 - e. Bartlett & Ghoshal’s organizational structures
 - f. Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture
 - g. ERP
 - h. Global IS Implementation

- i. Social impacts of globalization
 - j. Virtual teamwork
 - k. Off-shore IT sourcing
 - l. Experience abroad
 - m. Specific Global IS applications that raise unique issues in deployment and/or illustrate key concepts, such as in manufacturing, shipping, travel, medicine, finance, and human resources
 - n. ... ?
- 3) *What should be the learning objectives (outcomes), i.e., what should the student be able to do by the end of the course?*
- a. Build a multi-cultural Web site
 - b. Plan/design/develop/implement a global information system
 - c. List and discuss factors that contribute to economic development
 - d. Define and distinguish between political systems, between economic systems, and between cultures
 - e. Work on a virtual team
 - f. Use an ERP system
 - g. List and discuss challenges in managing global IT
- 4) *What hands-on tools would be most appropriate in teaching and learning Global IS?*
- a. E-mail
 - b. Chat
 - c. Bulletin Boards
 - d. Groupware
 - e. Web sites
 - f. International business case simulations
 - g. ... ?
- 5) *What interactive activities would be most appropriate?*
- a. Case analysis
 - b. Web site analysis (for multi-cultural needs)
 - c. Web site development
 - d. Videos and exercises on culture
 - e. Research reports on countries or regions
 - f. News, current events, ..
 - g. Field trips
 - h. Work on projects with students from other universities
 - i. ... ?

PANELIST POSITION STATEMENTS

Catherine Beise

This should be a required course in undergraduate IS programs and an elective in graduate IS programs. All business is becoming global business. IS students should understand global business in order to understand the IT needs of global organizations. The content should include generic dimensions of international business (cultural, political, economic), E-Business, Hofstede's national cultures model, and Bartlett and Ghoshal's global organization structures., and should include a hands-on multi-cultural Web page development component.

Rosann Webb Collins

The course should be an elective course at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, but designed so that it fulfills the typical university-wide requirement for international coursework. When the course is an elective it can be marketed to international business majors/minors and other majors, as well as MIS majors. The course content should include the technical, cultural, legal, structural and physical challenges to developing and used Global IS (GIS); key managerial tactics that address these challenges; how GIS enable/fit global business operations; and important environmental factors (e.g., global digital divide, international standards, government regulation) that impact GIS.

Fred Niederman

The course should focus on issues of multinational firms providing information resources for global operations; national policies regarding infrastructure, workforce pipeline, and relevant legal issues pertaining to IT such as intellectual property; and influences of culture on IT delivery, strategy, and policy choices. The course should also include development of individual skills regarding either websites for cross-cultural clients, virtual teams and distributed organizations, or software development in culturally diverse groups.

Jing “Jim” Quan

The course should include case studies from various countries including both developed and developing ones. Those case studies should focus on how firms leverage their global IT resources to gain sustainable competitive advantages. Study abroad would be preferred.

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

Catherine Beise, PhD, is Associate Professor of Information Systems at Salisbury University in Maryland. Her doctoral degree is from Georgia State University. As an academic, she has led several IS curriculum development efforts at both undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition to previous academic posts, her experience includes work in industry as a consultant, systems analyst, and programmer for a large computer vendor, a telecommunications company, and a systems consulting firm. She worked for the Army Research Lab for two years as a research associate facilitating the adoption and use of GSS by a variety of groups in government. Her current research focuses on virtual team project management and diversity in the IT workforce. She developed and teaches a senior-level course in Global IT Management, and recently led a group of business students on a study abroad program to France. She has published in *MIS Quarterly*, *Communications of AIS*, and other IS journals.

Rosann Webb Collins, PhD, is Associate Professor of Information Systems and Decision Sciences at the University of South Florida. Her current research focuses on global information systems and cognitive issues in systems development and testing. She developed and teaches courses on global information systems at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Her publications include a book, *Crossing Boundaries: The Deployment of Global IT Solutions*, and research articles in *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, *IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering*, *The Information Society*, the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, and other MIS and information science journals. Dr. Collins has consulted with numerous businesses, community organizations, libraries, and educational organizations on information technology use and issues.

Janette Moody, PhD, received an MBA and PhD in Management Information Systems from the University of South Florida. She received a BSBA degree in Statistics from University of Florida and certification as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Florida. Dr. Moody joined The Citadel faculty in 1993, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in Management Information Systems, Project Management, as well as undergraduate courses in Accounting and Accounting Information Systems. Prior to joining the faculty, Dr. Moody worked for Price Waterhouse CPAs, GTE Corp., Eastern Airlines, and Jack Eckerd Corp. Dr. Moody has published articles in numerous journals, including *MIS Quarterly*, *Expert Systems with Applications*, and *JMIS*. She is a frequent presenter at both national and regional conferences. Her research interests are in the areas of the behavioral aspects of systems development and the managerial aspects of IS personnel.

Fred Niederman, PhD, serves as the Shaughnessy Endowed Associate Professor of MIS at Saint Louis University. He has been at SLU since Fall of 1999. Prior to that he taught for 9 years at the University of Baltimore. His doctoral degree is from the University of Minnesota in 1990. His primary research areas pertain to using IT to support teams and groups; global IT; and IT personnel. Most recently he has been investigating the role of UML in development project success. He has published more than 20 refereed journal articles including *MIS Quarterly*, *Communications of the ACM*, and *Decision Sciences*; presented at several major conference; serves as associate editor of the *Journal of Global Information Systems*; and as the committee chair for computer personnel research in the special interest group on MIS through the ACM. He has recently successfully proposed a new course in Global Information Management that focuses heavily on team oriented communication technology and is scheduled for its rollout in the Fall.

Jing “Jim” Quan, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Information and Decision Sciences in the Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University. Before joining Salisbury in 2003, he taught Management Information Systems and Data Communications in the College of Business at Florida Atlantic University for 5 years. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Florida and is an MCT/MCSE and CNI/CNE. His research interests include organizational impacts of information technology (IT), IT professional and personnel issues, e-commerce, and global IT management. His work has appeared in such journals as *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Communications of AIS*, *Journal of Futures Markets*, and *Forum of Chinese Economists Society*. He has presented papers at numerous national and international conferences on information systems and technology. This summer he is teaching a Global IS Management course in China.