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# A Strategic Vision for Information Technology: What, Why, Who, Where, When and How?

Mary Brabston

*University of Tennessee, Chattanooga*

Omar El Sawy

*University of New South Wales*

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## PANEL 2

### A STRATEGIC VISION FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: WHAT, WHY, WHO, WHERE, WHEN AND HOW?

**Panel Chair:** Mary Brabston, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

**Panelists:** Omar El Sawy, University of Southern California  
Sirikka Jarvenpaa, University of Texas, Austin  
Neil Ramiller, University of California, Los Angeles

Advances in information technology to date have changed the way in which organizations can manage their information resources. Managers of business subunits are making IT decisions every day on their own without supervision from the IS subunit. They may be operating in a vacuum and their decisions will, therefore, likely reflect a lack of continuity and organizational purpose. The purpose of developing and communicating a strategic vision for IT is to inculcate that vision throughout the organization so that all organization members have access to this critical view of the role of IT in the organization and can make their decisions based on this understanding. Strategic vision for IT is, therefore, critical to an information-intensive organization.

The organization's strategic vision is typically generated by top management and implemented by top management's communication of this vision throughout the organization. In information intensive industries and organizations, IT planning and the development and communication of a strategic vision for IT are likely to be critical to the competitive position of the organization. Yet recent research in this area shows that organizations may be unlikely either to develop or to communicate a formal IT vision, even though, once implemented, the IT strategic vision should give subunit managers the insights into how they should allocate and control information resources in their own subunits.

Discussion will focus on theories which inform the construct of strategic vision for information technology and on operationalization, measurement and communication of this phenomenon. The panel of organizational and IT experts will lead the discussion regarding what is strategic vision for IT; what is its value; who is responsible for its development and communication; when should it be developed and communicated; where in the organization should it be communicated; and how can this phenomenon be operationalized and inform other research. The following is a brief summary of each participant's accomplishments regarding organizational and/or IT vision and its communication and the issues which they will address during the panel.

Mary Brabston is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Management at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. Her current research focuses on the communication of a strategic vision for information technology throughout information-intensive organizations.

Omar El Sawy, Associate Professor of Information Systems at the University of Southern California, has investigated the impacts of emerging information technologies on organizations and environmental scanning. He was also a Research Associate at the Center for Futures Research at the University of Southern California for four years. Dr. El Sawy will discuss issues concerning the pros and cons of vision development and communication.

Sirikka Jarvenpaa is currently Marvin Bower Fellow at the Harvard Business School and is an Associate Professor at the University of Texas, Austin. Her research interests include top management's views of IT and emerging organizational structures. Dr. Jarvenpaa will discuss emerging organizational structures, the role of IT in enabling and supporting these changes, and top management issues regarding IT vision.

Neil Ramiller is currently a lecturer in Management Information Systems at San Jose State University. He is completing his dissertation and working on other research involving strategic vision for information technology. Neil is the former managing editor of *Information Systems Research*.

## PANEL 3

### INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS JOURNALS: HOW DO THEY DIFFER FROM THEIR NORTH AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS?

**Panel Chair:** Robert D. Galliers, Warwick Business School

**Panelists:** David Avison, Southampton University  
Rob MacGregor, University of Wollongong  
Peter Neilssen, Aalborg University  
Jon Turner, New York University

A number of Information Systems journals published and edited in North America for many years have been, up until relatively recently, the only avenue for Information Systems researchers to reach an international audience. There have been, however, increasing numbers of international Information Systems journals published outside North America in recent years reflecting the growth in interest and activity in the topic worldwide.

While international in scope and quality, and while commanding wide circulation, it may be the case that only a small proportion of North American academics are aware of their existence. This represents a missed opportunity for publishing research material on their part and, more importantly, may well lead to a partial view only of the state of knowledge in any particular aspect of the Information Systems domain.

This panel aims to rectify this state of affairs and to provide insight into the orientation and publishing policies of a number of non-North American journals.

Five journals are represented:

- *Australian Journal of Information Systems* (AJIS)
- *European Journal of Information Systems* (EJIS)
- *Information Systems Journal* (ISJ)
- *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* (incorporating International Information Systems) (JSIS)
- *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems* (SJIS)

The focus of the session will be on the extent to which these non-North American journals reflect different value systems with respect to questions of rigor and relevance in Information Systems research, as well as the process by which the work of prospective authors is reviewed. The emphasis will be on what is similar and what is distinctive about these journals with respect to one another and to their North American counterparts, with Asia Pacific, European, Scandinavian and North American perspectives being provided by the panelists.

- Bob Galliers is editor-in-chief of *JSIS* and a member of the editorial boards of *AJIS*, *EJIS* and *ISJ*.
- David Avison is joint editor (with Guy Fitzgerald) of *ISJ*.
- Rob MacGregor is editor of *AJIS*.
- Peter Nielsen is editor of *SJIS*.
- Jon Turner is regional editor for the Americas of *JSIS*.