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TUTORIAL 5

TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE IS CURRICULUM

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A major shift away from centralized data processing to distributed systems and an increasing emphasis on the use of IS technology to link individuals and entities inside and outside the organization has created an imperative to integrate the study of telecommunications networks into the IS curriculum. The subject of this tutorial is to explore the appropriate domain of telecommunications subjects to be included in the IS curriculum and to discuss various approaches to developing and teaching courses in telecommunications.

We will begin with a discussion of the introductory or overview course in telecommunications or data communications. This will include a comparison of various sample course outlines that reflect different teaching styles and differences in a technical versus managerial emphasis in the course.

This will be followed by a description of several options for sequences of telecommunications elective courses, including a discussion of the content domain of each type of course and suggested combinations of electives that would constitute a coherent specialization in telecommunications. Information for this segment of the tutorial will be drawn from existing telecommunications programs and majors at various universities. We will develop an elective course sequence for a technically-oriented track in telecom, a managerial-oriented track in telecom, and a telecom policy track. The tutorial will also provide the participants with a list of model programs and courses, as well as contact names at various universities. We will also address the use of different pedagogical approaches to teaching the various telecommunications elective courses (i.e., hands-on laboratory approach, case studies, lecture/discussion) and discuss appropriate criteria for each.

Finally, the last segment of the tutorial will discuss various types of telecommunications jobs and careers available to graduates. We will also examine ways to develop relationships with and utilize local telecommunications professionals to support the courses and programs at the university. Telecom professionals from the user and vendor community are excellent resources for adjunct faculty, advisory groups on course content, guest speakers on particular technologies, donors of used equipment for university laboratories, and sources of job openings and internships for students.

The tutorial is expected to be interactive in nature and will attempt to focus on particular areas of interest to the audience. It will utilize available participant experience and expertise.