EDITORS' COMMENTS

Guest Editorial:
A Preview of the 2020 SIM IT Trends Study

Since 1980, the Society for Information Management (SIM), a co-founder of *MIS Quarterly* and *MIS Quarterly Executive*, in collaboration with a team of MIS academics, has conducted a survey of its members to identify and study the most important IT management issues. Over the decades, the SIM IT Trends Study has evolved and expanded into an insightful and comprehensive investigation of information systems (IS) issues, management practices, and leadership. The study provides both practitioners and academicians with valuable trends analyses as well as a snapshot of the state of IS management. This preview highlights a few topics from the 2020 study. The complete 40th anniversary report will appear in the March 2021 issue of *MIS Quarterly Executive*.

As in the past, data collection was conducted over the course of nine weeks, from April to June 2020. During this period, the research team contacted 3,802 SIM members. A total of 1,005 completed responses were received (26.43% response rate), representing 624 unique organizations and 345 CIOs. SIM member organizations come in all sizes and from more than 30 different economic sectors with 14
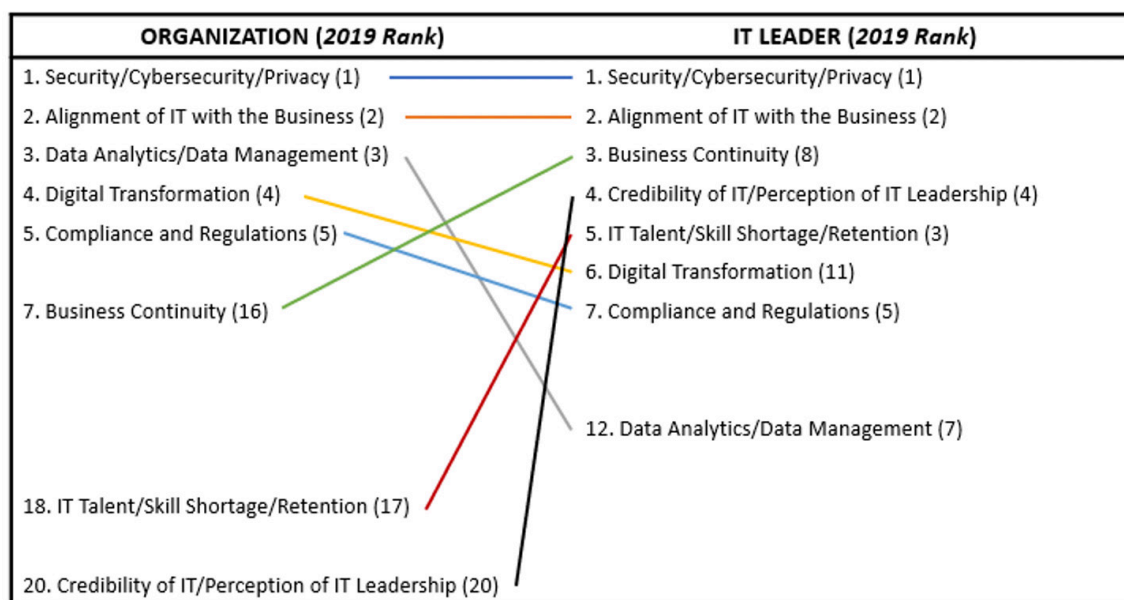
sectors represented by 10 or more organizations. Organizations range from early-stage private companies to well-established publically traded companies. The average revenue for participating organizations was $5.4 billion and the median revenue was $420 million. The findings in this preview are those of the senior-most IT executives in the 624 organizations.

Overall, significant shifts occurred in different areas covered by the study. Many of these shifts appear to be related to the COVID-19 crisis facing the world and to the resulting impact on supply chains, revenues, and organizations. The 2020 study also specifically explored organizational agility and captured some of the impacts of COVID-19 on organizations, and these too will be reported in the March issue.

Most Important and Most Worrisome IT Management Issues

Each year, the SIM IT Trends Study examines and reports on the IT management issues that are considered the most important to organizations and the most worrisome to senior IT leaders. Participants were asked to choose up to five IT management issues or concerns from a list of 41 options. While some issues like "Security/Cybersecurity/Privacy" and "Alignment of IT and/with the Organization" have been highly rated

Figure 1: Top-Five Most Important and Worrisome IT Management Issues

n = most senior IT leaders in 624 unique organizations

Figure 2: Top-Five Most Important and Worrisome IT Management Issues

n = most senior IT leader in 624 unique organizations

consistently in both lists, there are discrepancies between the top concerns of IT leaders and those of their organizations. Moreover, while the two lists were somewhat consistent from 2019 to 2020, "Business Continuity" rose sharply from 16th position to 7th for the organization and from 8th in 2019 to 3rd for the IT leader. Figure 1 illustrates the rankings and those differences.

The Largest IT Investments of Organizations

Participants were asked to select up to five areas/technologies from a list of 37 options in each of three categories: (1) their organization's largest near-term IT investments; (2) areas that should get more investment; and (3) areas of greatest concern to them personally. Investments in Cloud Computing, Analytics, Business Intelligence and related technologies (such as Data Mining, Big Data, and Forecasting), and Security continue to occupy the top three positions. In addition, "Collaboration Tools" increased from 16th position in 2019 to 8th in 2020. Figure 2 depicts the relative frequency of responses for those technologies that "should receive more investment." Interestingly, only Analytics and Security appear in the top five of all three lists.

Measuring IT Performance

Organizations use different metrics to measure IT performance. The questionnaire asked participants to select up to five (from a list of 34) of the most important performance measures used to evaluate their own performance as well as the performance of their organization's internal IT and outsourced IT. The top performance measures for internal IT over the past decade have remained somewhat consistent. "Availability/Up Time" and "Customer/User Satisfaction" continued in the

top two positions. "Cost of IT to the Business" moved up into the third position, "Value of IT to the Business" and "Help Desk Performance" rounded out the top five.

All This and More in the Next Issue of MISQE

The findings presented here provide but a glimpse at a few of the results of the 2020 SIM IT Trends Study. If you are interested in knowing more about what keeps CIOs up at night, with whom they spend their time, and what they spend it doing; as well as the practices of organizations with respect to IT spending, workforce, cloud, shared services, governance, cybersecurity, and the impact of COVID-19, then do not miss the March 2021 issue of the *MIS Quarterly Executive* and the complete report on these and many more topics, practices, key trends, unexpected results, and insights into the world of IT management and how it is evolving.

Leon Kappelman
University of North Texas; DFW SIM

Russell Torres
University of North Texas; DFW SIM

Ephraim McLean
Georgia State University; SIM Atlanta

Katia Guerra
University of North Texas

Vess Johnson
University of North Texas; Arkansas SIM

Chris Maurer
University of Virginia; At-Large

Kevin Kim
University of North Texas

Smriti Srivastava
University of North Texas