Preface

As with the first and second editions, this third edition of *Strategic Information Management: Challenges and strategies in managing information systems* aims to present the many complex and inter-related issues associated with the management of information systems, with a likely audience of MBA or other Master's level students and senior undergraduate students taking a course in strategic information management or something similar. Students embarking on research in this area should find the book of particular help in providing a rich source of material reflecting recent thinking on many of the key issues facing executives in information systems management. And like the first two editions, this third does not aspire to familiarize the reader with the underlying technology components of information systems nor enlighten the reader on expected trends in emerging technologies. While the second edition was a large departure from the first in the organization and readings, the third edition follows the same framework presented in the second edition while updating the chapters as much as possible. We will briefly recapture the organizing framework for those not familiar with the second edition.

The concept of 'strategic information management' conveys manifold images, such as the strategic use of information systems, strategic information systems planning, strategic information systems . . . Our conceptualization of the term, and hence of the scope of the book, is presented in Figure 0.1.

The inner circle of the figure depicts the information systems (IS) strategy. Whether explicitly articulated, or not[1] as appears to be frequently the case (Reich and Benbasat, 1996), without an IS strategy, the achievements of the IS in any given organization are likely to be more a result of hap and circumstance than a carefully guided intentional objective. Three of the dimensions of IS strategy proferred in Galliers (1991), drawing from Earl (1989), form the major topics of the readings in the first section of the book – information, information technology (IT), and information management strategy, and the related change management strategy.

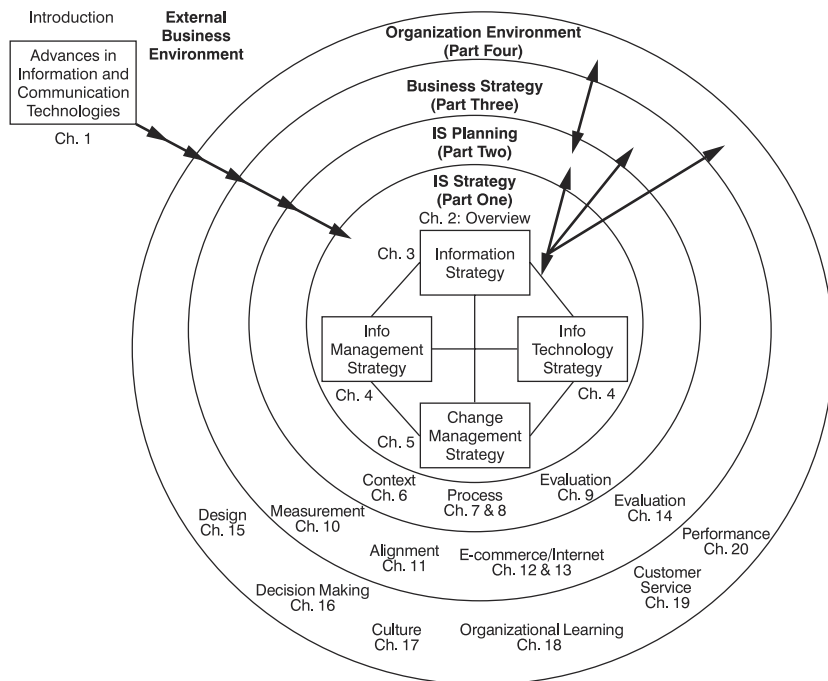[1] See also Ciborra *et al.* (2000).

Figure 0.1 *Conceptualizing strategic information management*

The second circle in Figure 0.1, encompassing that of the IS strategy, depicting IS Planning, forms the basis of the second section of the book. While the literature often associates Strategic IS Planning with IS strategy, we consider the topics as two: the plan produces the strategy. Included under the umbrella of IS planning are considerations of the IS planning environment, of the major issues of importance to IS planners, of the principal approaches used in developing IS plans, and of the evaluation of the success of IS.

The third circle in Figure 0.1 naturally forms the third section of the book, which considers the link between an organization's IS strategy (the inner circle) and the organization's business strategy. Because of the common substitution of IS planning for IS strategy in the literature, it was difficult to find articles that dealt explicitly with an IS strategy component as conceptualized in our figure. The topics forming this third section include two readings on IS-Business alignment, two readings concerned with eBusiness Strategies, and one reading concerned with the evaluation of IT proposals. Four of these chapters are new to this edition.

The outermost circle depicts the fourth and final section of the book, which offers some readings that examine the organizational outcomes of IS. The

articles in this section deal less with IS strategy as the underlying basis but with IS and their impact on the organization. The reason behind the inclusion of this fourth section is that, ultimately, the aim of introducing IS into organizations is to have positive results on the organization. These articles consider the relationships of IT to organizational structure, organizational design, organizational culture, organizational communication and decision making, organizational learning, customer relationships, and organizational performance. Two new chapters in Part Four are included in this edition.

The specific readings included in each section will be briefly summarized in the section introductions and hence will not be introduced here. Some of the articles included are marked by an academic quality. It might be helpful to suggest students prepare an analysis of the article using the following basic questions: (1) The research question: what is the major question and why is it important? (2) The assumptions: what are some of the primary assumptions guiding the study and are these valid in today's context? (3) The method: what method was used to investigate the questions (interviews, surveys, experiments, other) and how might the method have influenced, for better or worse, the results? (4) The results: what were the major findings, what was new, interesting, or unexpected in the findings and what are the implications of the findings for today's IT manager?

Following each article, we offer some questions that could serve as points of departure for classroom discussion. We recommend additional readings relevant to the chapters in the section introductions. What we have attempted to achieve is to cover some of the more important aspects of each topic, while at the same time providing references to other important work.

The subject of strategic information management is diverse and complex. It is not simply concerned with technological issues – far from it in fact. The subject domain incorporates aspects of strategic management, globalization, the management of change and human/cultural issues which may not at first sight have been considered as being directly relevant in the world of information technology. Experience, often gained as a result of very expensive mistakes (for example, the London Stock Exchange's ill-fated Taurus System), informs us that without due consideration to the kind of issues introduced in this book, these mistakes are likely to continue.

In selecting readings for this edition with the objective of covering the topics introduced in Figure 0.1, we noticed that the majority of new work dealt with topics covered in the third and fourth sections. We were unable to find many new ideas about IS strategy *per se* or about IS planning *per se*.[2] However, we found many new ideas concerning the IS–Business Strategy relationship as well as the relationship of IS to organizational outcomes.

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[2] A Special Issue of the *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* is planned, designed to fill this gap.

We attempted to include as many new readings of high calibre without unduly increasing the page length. We were particularly happy to note the new articles on alignment. In the second edition, we had observed much talk about alignment but little research on the nature of the link. This gap has been filled with fascinating work by Reich and Benbasat (Chapter 10) and by Sabherwal, Hirschheim, and Goles (Chapter 11).

We hope the third edition has built upon the framework offered in the second and introduces some additional current thinking to help you consider some of the many ways that IS can contribute to organizations.

Bob Galliers and Dorothy Leidner

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