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Alexis Gonzalez
Baylor University, alexis_sanchezgonza1@baylor.edu

Gina Green
Baylor University, gina_green@baylor.edu

Cindy Riemenschneider
Baylor University, C_Riemenschneider@baylor.edu

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Is Cloud-Computing Allowing Business Units to be IT Self-Sufficient?
The Need for a Change in the Role of Central IT

Alexis Sanchez Gonzalez alexis_sanchezgonza1@baylor.edu; Gina Green
gina_green@baylor.edu; Cindy Riemenschneider c_riemenschneider@baylor.edu;

The popularity of vertical cloud-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology has led to increased user-led implementations of CRMs in higher education institutions (HEIs). Many of these cloud-based vertical CRMs come with assurances of 'self-sufficiency' from vendors. Companies of all industries are using cloud computing because of its notable benefits: lower costs, shorter implementation times, improved scalability, flexibility, and accessibility (Bhattacherjee and Park 2014; Benlian 2011; Schneider and Sunyaev 2016). Additionally, "part of the premise of cloud computing in general is to reduce reliance on in-house IT" (Menninger, 2016, para. 3). Software and hardware solutions are increasingly being marketed to the business units to expand and upgrade their organizational processes without constant IT reliance. Are organizations able to achieve self-sufficiency from these cloud-based systems? To answer this research question, we are conducting a case study of five separate vertical cloud-based CRM implementations at one HEI.

Existing MIS research has broadly examined the implementation of information systems in organizations, most recently focusing on the emergence of business-managed IT implementations. The focus of the latter has been primarily in understanding the reasons for the emergence of this phenomenon and organizational responses to them (Furstenau et al. 2017; Gregory et al. 2018). Less studied in current IS literature is how the systems implementation process takes place in business-managed settings and how the implementation process impacts organizational outcomes. The present research addresses this gap by examining the business-unit led implementations of a vertical, cloud-based CRM system. We use the Socio-Technical Systems (STS) framework to guide our study. Socio-Technical Systems theory has been broadly used in examining organizational re-design and performance.

We are currently analyzing 17 interviews with key stakeholders using a grounded theory approach (Urquhart 2013). The premise of this study is to understand whether the business units can implement and maintain this cloud-based system with little to no IT expertise and examine the role if any, that central IT plays in this implementation.

References available upon request.

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