

January 2003

Information Systems in the MBA Curriculum: An International Perspective

David Avison

ESSEC Business School, avison@essec.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cais>

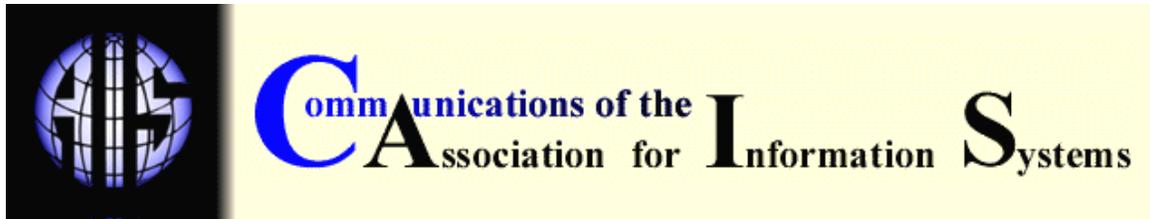
Recommended Citation

Avison, David (2003) "Information Systems in the MBA Curriculum: An International Perspective," *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*: Vol. 11 , Article 6.

DOI: 10.17705/1CAIS.01106

Available at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol11/iss1/6>

This material is brought to you by the AIS Journals at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in Communications of the Association for Information Systems by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.



INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE MBA CURRICULUM: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

David Avison
ESSEC Business School
avison@essec.fr

ABSTRACT

There is continual pressure to re-examine the MBA curriculum and, in particular, to reduce the core compulsory part. One of the courses taken out may be information systems. By quoting from the emails of 48 respondents from 11 countries of over 100 respondents in total to an ISWorld listserv request, we look at situations in many institutions and the varied opinions of colleagues. We learn about some success and failure stories, of colleagues who argue that IS should not be in the core curriculum (as well as the more common contrary view), and of attitudes of colleagues in other groups. Finally, we use these responses to develop a case for including IS in the MBA core. This article should be of use by colleagues who need to defend IS at their institutions.

Keywords: MBA, IS curricula, ISWorld

I. INTRODUCTION

On 28 November 2002 I sent the following request to the IS World listserv:

'My school is discussing a changed MBA with no IS in the core/compulsory part. Can colleagues help me to provide evidence that IS (however named), in particular other schools with IS compulsory in their MBA, should be part of the compulsory part of an MBA.'

The general problem is best expressed by one respondent thus: 'there is continuing pressure to whittle down the requirements so that students can get through faster... There is also pressure to add new topics to the curriculum, which usually means something has been taken out to make room for it.'

This was exactly the situation that emerged from a committee re-examining the MBA core curriculum at ESSEC Business School. The proposal was to drop IS from the core. My motivation was to seek help so that I could prevent this happening.

I received over 100 responses, most providing helpful information. The majority were supportive of IS in the core curriculum. As one respondent argues: 'I hope [my contribution] will help you to convince your school to maintain IT courses as compulsory [in your MBA]. To do otherwise appears irresponsible.'

Many suggested that they were presently or recently in the same situation as I found myself. One lament says simply 'this is a perpetual problem for us as well', another 'we are discussing the very same issue(s) now', another, almost identical, 'we at [named] University are dealing with the same issue right now', another 'I am struggling with just this problem', yet another 'I would be most interested to see these [responses] as we constantly face this type of pressure' and finally 'our case seems to be the same as yours ... this is the trend'.

One possible scenario is provided in the following response: 'We had a similar run-in last spring ... the committee had tentatively given IT the axe ... ultimately, [after some debate] we got cut from two 2-credit courses to one 2-credit class (which is a half-semester). But it's still part of the core.' A similar story is found in the following: 'At my school we have it in the core, although it was shortened to a 1/2 term and is constantly under scrutiny for removal'.

Many respondents to my e-mail asked me to unrelate specific comments to specific names (and institutions). I provide, therefore, an analysis of the responses without 'naming names' in the text but acknowledge the help of those respondents whose quotes I have used as a list of names in the acknowledgements at the end. There are almost 50 respondents listed!

The following represents my reflections based on these responses, using direct quotes. It is *not* a conventional 'research piece' embedded in the literature, but I think it is of interest and importance to all IS academics, now and in the future.

In the article we look at the responses to my email using many quotes direct from the responses. In the next section we learn of success and failure stories and in Section III of alternative strategies, such as an integrated core or joint courses. In Section IV we cite a number of dissenting voices – those who argue against IS being in the MBA core. In Section V we learn of the attitudes of other groups. Finally, we propose a schema for justifying MIS in the core curriculum which is presented also as a set of slides in the appendix (which colleagues might edit for their own presentations). I also inform readers in this last section of the latest situation at ESSEC.

II.SUCCESS AND FAILURE STORIES

SUCCESS STORIES

In some schools, IS was always part of the core MBA curriculum - one of around eight to sixteen core courses, depending on the MBA structure. Here is one success story: 'We have a one week *IS Strategy* core unit in all of our MBA programs (full-time, modular, executive). The Director of the School sees IS as an integrative discipline that helps pull strands such as strategy, operations management, marketing (e-commerce), etc. together. We also run MBA options on *e-business*, *IS Implementation*, and *Managing in a Virtual World*. They all do pretty well for student adoption.'

At one school, Management of IT is a core module for the MBA and in another school, 'we are doing quite the reverse and considering including 2 MIS units as compulsory in the MBA (as well as 4 optional units). Again, one of many people who asked for a copy of the responses states simply: 'not that we are having that difficulty at the moment. In fact IS is becoming core where it didn't used to be'.

Another respondent states that 'most schools have IS in the core MBA program. I have myself been teaching such a course for years. The MBA has a core IS course (3 credits) that all students have to take. Then they can opt for a MIS concentration (another 4 courses) if they so wish.' This respondent is shortly moving elsewhere in the USA where, he states, they have a similar structure. Again, at another university, the course in MIS is a compulsory part of the MBA core and 'is the third class (after accounting and quantitative methods) that the students take.'

In one business school, a major player in Europe, IS is 'very much part of the MBA obligatory curriculum'. The course is called '*IT Management*' and is very popular 'partly, I suspect, because I spend a lot of time hammering on the strategic importance of IT and how you cannot not know about technology (IT or not) as a top executive today'. So even here, it seems, IS is not an obvious choice and needs continuous embedding to ensure it remains in the core.

Again, at another university, Managing Information Systems is part of the core of the MBA but 'Having said that, there are periodic "threats" to its status in the core' and a similar story is found elsewhere where the core course is 'Managing Information & Knowledge'. Another respondent states 'We have just revamped our MBA curriculum. "Managing IT and e-Commerce" is a required course for all MBA students. Not having such a course will be great disservice to students in this information, Internet, and e-Commerce age.'

The foregoing might imply that the name 'information systems' may not be appealing, indeed, one respondent suggested that 'information systems' is unattractive as a title for a core course in our topic, and suggests 'eBusiness' as more appropriate for a business school. Another suggests renaming it as '*Information and Knowledge Management*'.

At one distance-learning university they propose an e-learning MBA program for CEOs. This program requires three IS courses: *Information and IT*; *Decision Support Technology*; and *e-Business: Management and Technology*. 'The aim of these courses is to give MBA students a large vision of the IS environment. We want to prepare them, as decision makers:

- 1) To perceive the usefulness of IS for them;
- 2) To be able to think of IS as strategic tools;
- 3) To be able to challenge IS professionals to propose IT integration as such strategic tools.

To do so, they must master the language and concepts of the IS domain. They must also have a good knowledge of the issues at stake such as organizational, social or ethical issues.'

In other schools, IT is fairly new. At one school they added MIS Concepts (an introductory survey of MIS issues) last year as a 'requirement for all MBA students. It was not only applauded by the students but it has been found useful by employers and faculty who teach upper level courses. In today's world, MIS is as important as accounting; in fact, many professionals will never have to work with accounting in their life but they will certainly have to relate to technology throughout their whole career.'

In one university IT is well established: 'Our MBA is relatively old ... Currently, we have the following courses:

- Pre-MBA: Principles of MIS (3 credit hours)
- Business Core: Information Resources Management (3 credit hours)
- Electives: Systems Development, data management, management support systems, e-Commerce (3 credit hours each).'

The writer is surely shrewd in stating that 'we are trying to re-engineer it now.' As we will see later, too often colleagues have not updated their IS offerings. Another states: 'currently [I am] working on the development of a new core MBA module called 'The Dynamics of IT Enabled Change'. The intent of the module is to integrate strategy, organization development and IT focused on the needs of senior management.'

Finally in this section a particularly optimistic note: 'I'm currently in this job market and find a tremendous demand to the contrary' – it seems at least some universities value information systems!

FAILURE STORIES

Two correspondents made the bold statement 'All well known prestigious programs have a required IT course.' Unfortunately, at least from my knowledge, this is not true. As one respondent states: 'An IT course was taken out of the core at [my leading university] after a benchmarking study with peer schools. This benchmarking study showed that only half of our peer schools had IT in the MBA core.'

Perhaps failure stories can be summed up by one business school academic who comments 'No help to you, I know, but sadly we still have no core IS course in the MBA here' or another who states 'I'm in a similar situation with IS being only an elective for the general MBA.' Other

'solutions' appear more like 'lip service': 'At our School of Business, students require 3 hours of MIS to complete the MBA'.

I agree with the respondent who argues that the following is nearer a failure story than a success story: 'A committee is revising the MBA curriculum here... and they're thinking about actually including IS in the core for the first time. But the idea floating around seems to be for some kind of mini-course, which - beyond being substantively inadequate - also would send the wrong signal to the students (and others) about the perceived importance of IS.'

Another respondent argues that 'we don't have a compulsory IS unit in our MBA - it has 10 core subjects in a total of 16. We are currently arguing for a change in this. We have electives in *IT management*, *eCommerce management* and *IT strategy* - but these are not overwhelmingly popular.' It is this last remark that is most telling. We will return to the question of the attractiveness of our courses to MBA students.

Of course IS academics need to be on the ground to defend the subject as one lament demonstrates: 'the core IS unit was removed from the curriculum after I left two years ago (with no champion, there was no-one to put arguments for its retention)'.

III.ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

INTEGRATED CORE

An alternative approach is to offer a core module in the first year covering the basic management topics including IS options, with IS options available if students want to cover it in more depth later: 'We have an "integrated" core that currently runs three quarters of the first year. It was a full-year course until 2 years ago. We have fought the battle of inclusion in the core, more specifically "degree of inclusion" and continue to do so in every MBA core revision. But, so far, we've won the battle and continue to be a full member.'

Such courses could be vital to attract students to specialist optional courses in IS later. If the course is well designed it may also provide our majors with a solid foundation for more advanced courses and an appreciation for how IS can better serve other disciplines. But, in practice, it may need to be more a 'song and dance sales routine' to attract students to our optional courses than 'a solid foundation'.

Sometimes it becomes an unhappy compromise. Here is a story of a struggle that led to such a compromise: 'I fought extremely hard to get IS even represented as an elective option. This was achieved but I failed to get representation in the core apart from 6 hours (2 times 3 hour sessions) squeezed in between accountancy, finance and economics. Imagine the hard positivist and soft interpretivist contrast - it did not fit very well at all. Students were very confused and were looking for linkages and synergies that did not exist.'

JOINT COURSES AND IS IN OTHER CORE MODULES

Some MBA strategies assume that IT/IS will be covered in the other core courses en passant. But as one respondent argues: 'There should be a separate course because [IS issues] will be ignored in other courses or treated as peripheral and therefore barely noticeable to most students.'

A more justifiable approach is to have a joint course with another group. However, joint courses can lack coherence with the two or more parts being separate. But if designed well, such an approach can be a good compromise. 'My response was to design a "Systems in Organizations" course that could be taught from either an information systems or operations management viewpoint depending on the instructor's interests and knowledge.' Here, the designer expects the course to be taught by either group, but it can equally be taught jointly with good preparation.

OTHER STRATEGIES

An alternative approach is to propose specialist MSc programs in business schools; indeed, we have one such successful program at ESSEC. One respondent states 'we have started a new

MSc in Strategy here, with at present about 70 students. One of four obligatory courses is called Technology Strategy and Strategic Technology, and is focused on how companies use technologies to compete (in all marketplaces) as well as on how technology companies compete. Again, it is driven by the perceived need to understand technology. Note that the term technology here is not solely IT - though IT is, of course, the most important part of it.'

This response shows the different views taken by colleagues about the topics using the ISWorld listserv. Some see information systems as IT; others see it as being the organizational and social impacts of IT. However, in any case, my response in this article relates to IS in the core curriculum of MBAs and not MSc programs.

IV. SOME DISSENTING VOICES WITHIN

I was surprised by some dissenting voices. One respondent suggested that the compulsory course in IS that is taught for MBA students is usually inadequate. I will quote much from his response:

'In my opinion, the course is typically NOT well designed. It tends to be a survey course, and has changed little since the 1980s. There is a steady stream of "new" textbooks, several every year, and the price keeps going up, but each new edition is little changed from the previous one. There are always a couple of introductory chapters, then one on the SDLC, one on database and a touch of E-R diagramming, one on networks, perhaps two or three chapters on different kinds of systems, and these days several chapters on the Web. At the end of each chapter are several short cases which depict situations where the company did everything right.

Most students are bored to tears with this approach; they have been working with computers for years and feel they are not learning anything useful. I don't want to make rash statements here that I can't back up, but in a few situations I'm familiar with the course is taught by professors who are good presenters but have not kept up with new technologies and methods, have no practical experience themselves, and sometimes don't have a clue as to what a "system" is. They may know it has inputs and outputs and be able to draw an impressive looking diagram with a CASE tool, but without real understanding of how it works. We ignore emerging technologies and the impacts they may have on systems until they are well established.'

I think that there is at least some truth in the above statement. Indeed, another respondent states 'We don't teach a good core course that wins student support'. We need to 'design a course, and develop supportive textbooks, that provides students with real skills and a sense for what an exciting field this is, they will demand that it be in the core and none of our colleagues will question it. Otherwise, perhaps it is not as valuable as the course proposed to replace it.' This issue needs to be addressed!

Yet another dissenting voice is even more controversial: 'Perhaps the problem is not with IS itself, but with the people who teach it?' He also suggests that: 'Irrelevant research may be a contributing factor.'

Another respondent asks us to address two questions: 'How much of the MIS curriculum is truly unique to MIS? Cannot principles of technical support and integration with a complete business system be taught better in the context of each of the business disciplines?'. He suggests the answer to the first question is 'very little' and the second question is 'yes'!

Another dissenting voice also makes some telling points against MIS being part of the core of an MBA but from a totally different perspective: 'We had a compulsory IS course as part of the core until about a year ago. It was the MIS faculty who decided we don't want it in the core, since many of our MBA students have strong MIS backgrounds already (even if they've not had a formal class). Instead, we've created a case-based course that I'll teach as an elective for the first time in the spring. We expect the course to be very well received since it'll be taken by folks who self-select as needing/wanting a managerial-level background in MIS. It became tedious for all involved to teach a course to students with such widely varying incoming skills and knowledge. This information may not be what you want to hear, but I thought you'd be interested to know of a school where such a move was initiated by us MIS folks. Our proposal was seen as very

surprising since many areas struggle to keep/push courses into the core. Our MIS area has strong demand and we much prefer a model where we teach courses that'll add value to everyone in the class.'

V. ATTITUDES OF COLLEAGUES IN OTHER GROUPS

Many respondents suggest that though the arguments might be on academic or economic (demand and supply) grounds, this is a power struggle with those groups with the large numbers of staff voting for their own topic. IS is usually a relatively small group in business schools and elsewhere when compared to the numbers in accounting, finance, marketing, strategy and so on. As one respondent states following the dropping of her course: 'The reason this happened was political. No IT faculty was on the MBA committee'.

It might also be partly due to ignorance about IS: 'This is also a result of many non-IT faculty thinking that IT is about having a PC rather than the flow of information throughout and among organizations.' At best, says one respondent, the business school attitude to IS is 'ambivalent'. Further, decisions may be taken by 'faculty members who did their academic work prior to information systems and don't understand its importance'.

However, another argues that 'it depends on how you want to sell it', suggesting that we in IS have not done a good job in convincing others of the domain's importance. Regarding this particular time, over-emphasis on eCommerce during the Internet bubble has led to some disenchantment with IS. It was certainly my own view that triumphalist statements like 'we were right and you were wrong' were greatly misplaced at the time they were said (only about two years ago), and seem somewhat ironic now in the context of this issue.

BUSINESS ATTITUDES

Some evidence suggests that business is requiring some IS knowledge from their MBA recruitment: 'they see the importance of IS/Business alignment and this depends on being able to manage the relationships between the IS group and the rest of the organization.' However, another respondent disagrees: 'The essential problem is that MIS is not perceived by the powers within business schools [and within business] as being really about management at all [but about technology]!

VI. REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER WORK

JUSTIFICATION FOR IS AS A CORE MODULE OF THE MBA

One justification could be fundamental – as one respondent argued: 'information is a resource at least as important to the management of enterprise as the basic economic resources of land, capital, and labor. [But] our ability to manage it in really effective ways is very limited'. The implication here is that courses in information systems will help manage the process.

However, the above argument may not win many minds. In this section, therefore, we propose some specific arguments that might be used with colleagues to justify the inclusion of IS in the core discipline. These arguments are listed in the appendix for easy adaptation to presentation slides. Colleagues may well add material which is specifically oriented towards their circumstances, for example, the excellence of IS teaching and research at their institution, positive comments from past and present students, and positive comments from local businesses or sponsors of students.

One respondent of my email recalled Bill King's earlier efforts in discussions with the AACSB 'which has not been a big supporter of IS in MBA curricula'. Bill King was founding president of the AIS. Many thanks are also due to those more recently representing IS to the AACSB, in particular by Blake Ives, Joe Valacich, Dick Watson and Bob Zmud and 36 other colleagues. The formal part of this representation is contained in the paper: 'What Every Business Student Needs to Know about Information Systems' by these authors published in the *Communications of the AIS* (Volume 9, 2002, pp 467-477). This article can be usefully read in conjunction with the present article.

We are already able to draw on excellent exemplars of international schools which have IS as part of their MBA core curriculum, including:

Harvard - Core Technology and Operations Management

Columbia - Part of Core Operations Management

Berkeley - Required Leading Edge Technology Conference

Stanford - Core Management in an Information Age

Cornell - Core e-Commerce Management

Warwick University - Core Information Systems

London Business School - Core Information Systems

Norwegian School of Management - Core Information Systems

Smurfit Graduate School of Management - Core Management Information Systems

National University Singapore - Core Information Systems

But accreditation and exemplars are not enough to sustain an argument for inclusion of IS. Fortunately, we have many arguments which together suggest that IS is both a core competence for today's managers and a crucial issue for future managers. IS impacts on almost all processes and all departments of all organizations. No top executive can afford to ignore technology. Further, companies use technologies to compete, it is a key competitive weapon and executives need to know how it can be used in this way for their organizations and ensure they will not be placed at a competitive disadvantage through their ignorance. Business systems are dependent on and are integrated with information systems, so managers need to know about the technology systems supporting their processes. They also need to ensure that IS and IT strategy is linked to business strategy, that is, ensure strategic alignment.

There are other arguments. Business organizations spend enormous amounts of time, energy and money (roughly half of their capital expenditures) on these systems. Executives need to know about IT and IS to ensure that their money is spent effectively. IT and IS failure are crucial factors in business failure. Professional managers need to be confident with technology and be able to manage technology-oriented people and make technology-oriented decisions throughout their whole career. In conclusion, therefore, IT and IS issues are crucial organizational issues.

Information systems is also a crucial issue for future managers: students on our MBA courses. Future managers must be aware of how IT affects everything else they will do in their career as managers. Future business professionals need to know their responsibilities to ensure the success of information systems. Managers need to know about corporate IT, information, and knowledge resources. IS is a critical component in value creation (and cost minimization) in every functional area.

In conclusion, taking information systems off the core curriculum (or not adding IS where it does not already exist) will be seen by many potential students, companies and governments as a very regressive step (e.g. not keeping up with technology and knowledge management). Information systems are pervasive, important and yet misunderstood and difficult to manage well; information systems knowledge for all managers is essential. By implication, it is surely also essential to include information systems as a core element of the MBA curriculum to improve the situation.

... AND AT ESSEC BUSINESS SCHOOL

Information systems has been part of the core MBA curriculum at ESSEC for some years. However, a committee (not including representation from IS faculty) proposed a reduction of the number of core courses. It had made a preliminary proposal of six core topics that did not include information systems in November 2002. Following representations by myself and colleagues in December (armed with arguments gained from responses to my email), the committee then made

a suggestion that one of the six core modules should be entitled *IS and Operations Management* and this should be a combination of operations research, statistics, logistics, and information systems. Further representations in January 2003 make likely that IS will form about half of the material covered in this core module. There will also be further IS modules offered as options.

Thus, happily, the many contributions made by IS colleagues responding to my email discussed in this article are already useful at ESSEC. I hope the article and slides attached in the Appendix will also be useful to colleagues elsewhere. As one respondent states: 'I, too, have been involved with something of an argument with respect to the quantity of IS courses that should be part of our program, and I believe your slides could help me tip the balance of power.' I hope that there are other positive results.

FURTHER WORK

One respondent suggests that it is 'worth organizing a workshop to discuss the issues'; another suggests a panel at AMCIS or ICIS; and another suggests a web page devoted to this topic on ISWorld. This does seem to be both a 'hot issue' in that many respondents from many countries thought it important to them at present as they fight to add IS to the core curriculum or keep it as part of the core of an MBA. It does seem to be a recurring issue as well, as some respondents described similar problems at their universities in past times. For example, one respondent reflects: 'the problem is not new - schools were facing it in the early 90s when IS was out of favor.' It is also a vital issue, as the inclusion or exclusion of IS in the core curriculum has a major negative impact on academic jobs in IS (and therefore IS research and practice) and the status of the topic of information systems in business schools and elsewhere.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge all respondents generally and in particular the following who contributed directly to the writing of this response – with grateful thanks:

Muhammad Al-Khaldi, King Fahd University, Saudi Arabia;
Steven Alter, University of San Francisco, USA;
Espen Andersen, Norwegian School of Management, Norway;
Anandhi Bharadwaj, Emory University, USA;
Mary Brabston, University of Manitoba, Canada;
Bob Brookshire, James Madison University, USA;
Janice M. Burn, Edith Cowan University, Australia;
Bruce Campbell, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia;
Anne Chartier, Télé-Université, Québec, Canada
Roger Clarke, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong;
Gordon B. Davis, University of Minnesota, USA;
Gurpreet Dhillon, University of Las Vegas, USA;
John S. Edwards; Aston Business School, UK;
Carlos Ferran, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA;
Gavin Finnie, Bond University, Australia;
Jennifer Goddard, La Trobe University Australia;
Paul Gray, Claremont Graduate University, USA;
Ray Hackney, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK;
Alan R. Heminger, Air Force Institute of Technology, USA;
Ernest Jordan, Macquarie University, Australia;
Edd R. Joyner, The University of Tennessee at Martin, USA;
Kate Kaiser, Marquette University, USA;
Malcolm King, Loughborough University, UK;
Jane Klobas, Università Bocconi, Italy;
Frank Land, London School of Economics, UK;
Alexander J. McLeod, University of Texas San Antonio, USA;
Donna.W.McCloskey, Widener University, USA;
Joe McDonagh, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland;

Judith McKay, Monash University, Australia;
 Peter Marshall, Mt Eliza Business School, Australia;
 Anne P. Massey, Indiana University, USA;
 Joshua L Mindel, Carnegie Mellon University, USA;
 John Mingers, Warwick Business School, UK;
 Bonnie Montano, Georgetown University, USA;
 Peter O'Connor, ESSEC Business School, France;
 Richard Orwig, Washington State University, USA;
 Shailendra Palvia, Long Island University, USA;
 Neil Ramiller, Portland State University, USA;
 Bruce Rollier, University of Baltimore, USA;
 Steve Sawyer, Penn State University, USA;
 Laurie Schatzberg, University of New Mexico, USA;
 Ulrike Schultze, Southern Methodist University, USA;
 Vikram Sethi, University of Texas at Arlington, USA;
 Bill Tastle, Ithaca College, New York, USA;
 Teo Sian Hin Thompson, National University of Singapore;
 Richard Vidgen, University of Bath, UK;
 David Wainwright, Northumbria University, UK;
 Ralph Westfall, California Polytechnic University, USA;

Editor's Note: This article was received on December 30, 2002 and was published on January 20, 2003.

APPENDIX. JUSTIFICATION FOR IS AS A CORE MODULE OF THE MBA: PRESENTATION SLIDES

There follows a set of slides that I used in my presentation at ESSEC to justify the inclusion of IS as a core module of the MBA. I omitted ESSEC-related material as some of this is sensitive and other aspects specific only to my school. Much of the material in these slides comes from respondents to my e-mail, in particular Steven Alter, Gordon Davis, Peter O'Connor and Brian Pentland. As another respondent argues 'We don't make a clear case for MIS in the core'. I hope this represents the beginnings of such a case.

SLIDE 1:

MIS IS CORE COMPULSORY FOR INTERNATIONAL MBAS

Harvard - Core Technology and Operations Management

Columbia - Part of Core Operations Management

Berkeley - Required Leading Edge Technology Conference

Stanford - Core Management in an Information Age

Cornell - Core e-Commerce Management

Warwick University - Core Information Systems

London Business School - Core Information Systems

Norwegian School of Management - Core Information Systems

Smurfit Graduate School of Management - Core Management Information Systems

National University Singapore - Core Information Systems

SLIDE2:**MIS IS A CORE COMPETENCY FOR TODAY'S MANAGERS**

- IT and IS are of strategic importance in organizations today - as a top executive you cannot not know about technology
- Companies use technologies to compete; it is a key competitive weapon
- Business systems are dependent on and are integrated with information systems
- Business organizations spend enormous amounts of time, energy and money (roughly half of their capital expenditures) on these systems

SLIDE3:**MIS IS A CORE COMPETENCY FOR TODAY'S MANAGERS (CONTINUED)**

- IT/IS failure and a lack of strategic alignment are crucial factors in business failure
- IT/IS issues are therefore crucial organizational issues
- Professional managers need to be confident with technology and be able to manage technology-oriented people and make technology-oriented decisions throughout their whole career

SLIDE 4:**MIS - CRUCIAL FOR FUTURE MANAGERS**

- Future managers must be aware of how IT will affect everything else they do in organizations
- Future business professionals need to know their responsibilities to ensure the success of these systems
- Managers need to know about corporate IT, information and knowledge resources
- IS is a critical component in value creation (and cost minimization) in every functional area
- IS is pervasive, but at the same time, it is widely misunderstood and mismanaged because of poor knowledge about IS of today's managers

SLIDE 5:**FURTHER IMPACT OF IGNORING INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

An MBA without an IS core component will be seen by many potential students, companies and governments as a very regressive step (e.g. not keeping up with technology and knowledge management)

SLIDE 6:**PROBLEM AND SOLUTION****Problem:**

Information systems are pervasive, important and yet misunderstood and difficult to manage well; information systems knowledge for all managers are required by MBA students, managers, companies and governments

Solution:

Include information systems as a core element of the MBA curriculum

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Avison is Professor of Information Systems at ESSEC Business School, Paris, France after being Professor at the School of Management at Southampton University in the UK for nine years. He is also visiting professor at University Technology, Sydney, Australia and Brunel University in England. He is joint editor of Blackwell Science's *Information Systems Journal*. So far, he has written over twenty books (plus one translation from the French) including in 2002 the third edition of the leading text in Information Systems Development (with Guy Fitzgerald). He is joint editor of the Butterworth-Heinemann series of texts in IS. He published a large number of research papers in learned journals, edited texts and conference papers. He is Chair of the International Federation of Information Processing (IFIP) 8.2 group on the impact of IS/IT on organizations and society, vice chair of IFIP technical committee 8 and was past President of the UK Academy for Information Systems and also chair of the UK Heads and Professors of IS. He was research chair of ICIS in Atlanta, program chair of the IFIP conference in Amsterdam, panels chair for ECIS in Copenhagen and publicity chair for the entity-relationship conference in Paris (all joint) and chair of several other UK and European conferences. He will be joint program chair of ICIS 2005 in Las Vegas and joint PhD consortium chair for ICIS 2006 in London. He also acts as consultant and most recently worked with a leading manufacturer developing their IT/IS strategy. He researches in information systems development and on information systems in their natural setting, in particular using action research, though he has also used a number of other qualitative research approaches.

(See also: <http://www.essec.fr/domsite/cv.nsf/WebCv/David+Avison>)

Copyright © 2003 by the Association for Information Systems. Permission to make digital or hard copies of all or part of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and full citation on the first page. Copyright for components of this work owned by others than the Association for Information Systems must be honored. Abstracting with credit is permitted. To copy otherwise, to republish, to post on servers, or to redistribute to lists requires prior specific permission and/or fee. Request permission to publish from: AIS Administrative Office, P.O. Box 2712 Atlanta, GA, 30301-2712 Attn: Reprints or via e-mail from ais@gsu.edu



Communications of the Association for Information Systems

ISSN: 1529-3181

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Paul Gray

Claremont Graduate University

AIS SENIOR EDITORIAL BOARD

Cynthia Beath Vice President Publications University of Texas at Austin	Paul Gray Editor, CAIS Claremont Graduate University	Sirkka Jarvenpaa Editor, JAIS University of Texas at Austin
Edward A. Stohr Editor-at-Large Stevens Inst. of Technology	Blake Ives Editor, Electronic Publications University of Houston	Reagan Ramsower Editor, ISWorld Net Baylor University

CAIS ADVISORY BOARD

Gordon Davis University of Minnesota	Ken Kraemer Univ. of California at Irvine	Richard Mason Southern Methodist University
Jay Nunamaker University of Arizona	Henk Sol Delft University	Ralph Sprague University of Hawaii

CAIS SENIOR EDITORS

Steve Alter U. of San Francisco	Chris Holland Manchester Business School, UK	Jaak Jurison Fordham University	Jerry Luftman Stevens Institute of Technology
------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	---

CAIS EDITORIAL BOARD

Tung Bui University of Hawaii	H. Michael Chung California State Univ.	Candace Deans University of Richmond	Donna Dufner U. of Nebraska -Omaha
Omar El Sawy University of Southern California	Ali Farhoomand The University of Hong Kong, China	Jane Fedorowicz Bentley College	Brent Gallupe Queens University, Canada
Robert L. Glass Computing Trends	Sy Goodman Georgia Institute of Technology	Joze Gricar University of Maribor Slovenia	Ruth Guthrie California State Univ.
Juhani Iivari University of Oulu Finland	Munir Mandviwalla Temple University	M.Lynne Markus Bentley College	Don McCubbrey University of Denver
Michael Myers University of Auckland, New Zealand	Seev Neumann Tel Aviv University, Israel	Hung Kook Park Sangmyung University, Korea	Dan Power University of Northern Iowa
Nicolau Reinhardt University of Sao Paulo, Brazil	Maung Sein Agder University College, Norway	Carol Saunders University of Central Florida	Peter Seddon University of Melbourne Australia
Doug Vogel City University of Hong Kong, China	Hugh Watson University of Georgia	Rolf Wigand University of Arkansas	Peter Wolcott University of Nebraska- Omaha

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Eph McLean AIS, Executive Director Georgia State University	Samantha Spears Subscriptions Manager Georgia State University	Reagan Ramsower Publisher, CAIS Baylor University
---	--	---