

**University of Illinois at Chicago  
Department of Information & Decision Sciences**

**SYLLABUS  
IDS 515 Information Systems Strategy & Management [ Fall 2005 ]**

Instructor: Dr. C Ranganathan (“Ranga”)  
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Time: 6:00 – 8:30 PM  
Days: Mondays  
Room: 220 SH

Office hours: [TBA / by appointment.]

**Course Overview:**

This course is designed to expose the students to the opportunities and challenges associated with strategic management of information technology (IT). We will examine both strategic and managerial issues associated with using information technology for enhancing business performance. We will examine the issues facing senior IT executives and understand the managerial decisions facing them. The course will largely adopt a managerial approach, rather than focus on technical aspects. Skills of critical reasoning, ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing, and creativity will be emphasized in this class.

**Required Text:**

A required set of readings for each session is enclosed. All the readings will be made available through UIC library resources or Blackboard site.

Optional book (contains many readings used in this course): *Strategies for e-business success*. (Eds : Erik Brynjolfsson and Glen Urban), (MIT Sloan Management Review Series), 2001, Josey-Bass.

**Grading**

Case Preparation and analyses (2 \* 10): 20%

Group case presentation: 10%

Group Field Project: 40%

Assignments: 20%

Attendance, Class Participation, Contribution to Class & Group work: 10%

**Group Case Presentation:**

There are many case-sessions in this course. It is your responsibility to prepare them for discussion in class on the scheduled dates. I reserve the right to pick students at random for case discussions. Lack of preparation for case discussions will prove detrimental to your grade.

On the days in which case discussion is scheduled, we will have ONE or more groups present their analysis of the case study in the class. At the beginning of the semester, your

group will be assigned a particular case study for group presentation. The group members are expected to present their analysis of the case based on the questions assigned. You are encouraged to search for additional information on the company or the topic under investigation. You will be evaluated on the content of your presentation, quality of your analysis, rationale and arguments, soundness of your recommendations and action plan.

As a group, you are expected to submit a hard copy of your powerpoint slides to me BEFORE your presentation. I would also require you to submit an electronic copy through Blackboard site. Some useful guidelines for case analysis:

- In the interest of time, avoid repeating the case facts. Focus on your analysis.
- Answer the specific questions that are given.
- Summarize major points of the case studies, using bullet-points
- Be precise and to the point
- Take a position, and provide arguments, justifying your position(s).
- Analyze critically giving both pros & cons of different issues at hand.
- Relate your answers to the theory discussed in class or in the readings
- Keep the time-frame of the case study in mind.

### **Case preparation and analyses (Individual work)**

Please choose any two case studies (*these cases must be DIFFERENT from the one you were assigned for group presentation*) from the given set of case studies and submit a write-up (not exceeding 3 pages) that summarizes the answers to the case questions. The idea of this exercise to help you gain both analytical as well as written communication skills. The write-ups should be submitted before the commencement of the class on scheduled dates. The write-ups are primarily intended to provide an indication on the extent of analysis and thinking-through that has been done by the student. The write-ups should focus on *case analysis* rather than repetition of the case facts. *If the write-ups are not satisfactory, they will be returned for resubmission.* You are encouraged to search for more information on the organization using library resources or Internet, or provide additional examples that are relevant.

### **Field Project:**

The group project is a major component of this course, and will count for 40% of your grade. The objective of this project is to develop a detailed report discusses IT-related managerial issues in a real-life setting. This project should focus on a particular issue or a decision problem pertaining to IT. For instance, your report could focus on any of the following areas (sample areas):

- IT strategy formulation and implementation
- Implementation of a e-supply chain solution or a CRM solution
- Tracing e-business initiatives, challenges and managerial actions
- Offshoring and Outsourcing – Best practices
- Implementing RFID
- Warehousing, Data Mining and Web Analytics
- M-Commerce

The steps involved in this project are:

Pick an IT related topic or an issue your team finds interesting.

Identify a real, large firm (preferably Chicago-based, well established firm) for studying this topic (or you could choose 2-3 firms belonging to the same industry). Make sure you choose a company about which you can find enough information from different sources. You are encouraged to contact a few companies before making a final decision on the companies you would study.

Once you have identified a topic and a company, submit a proposal that briefly discusses the issues you propose to study, the company (or companies) you are planning to study, and the specific learning objectives of your case study project. The proposal should also discuss briefly the context of the company/problem, and should outline your action plan.

I will expect the group to engage in considerable secondary data collection from library/literature search, and some kind of primary data collection. Primary data may be interviews with executives in the company or from company-specific literature. I strongly encourage you to seek primary data as interviewing top executives will be an enriching experience for you. You are greatly encouraged to gather primary data directly from the companies through direct interviews, telephone interviews, interactions with executives or site-visits. My office will provide assistance in giving you letters of reference, arranging interviews/tele-interviews, sending faxes etc. You will be interacting with me on a regular basis throughout the course of this project, and I shall guide you in your data collection, search and analysis.

Once you collect data, you are expected to analyze the data, and work like “consultants” to the company. You will come up with 2-3 alternatives for the company and also recommendations. Your final case report will briefly describe the industry setting, the company setting and the key e-business issues in the organization(s) you are studying, along with your analysis.

You will be evaluated upon

- Extent of data collected and quality of data collected (collect as many articles, websites and papers on the subject; rich interviews providing good information)
- Richness of your analysis
- Suggestions and Recommendations
- Communication and Presentation (oral and written)

The output from this exercise would be a comprehensive report. You will also be required to submit a master data file containing all secondary and primary data you collected as a part of this project. Please submit both soft and hard copies of your reports. The reports will be returned for resubmission if found unsatisfactory.

For evaluation purposes, you would be required to produce the following:

- A brief proposal (not exceeding 3 pages) that gives information on
  - o the topic of your project and the issue you intend to study
  - o a brief description of organization/industry and issue you have chosen to study
  - o data collection plan (sources? interviews? site visits?)
  - o a project activity schedule mentioning key milestones in your project, along with estimated time required for each activity. Refer to due dates given in the course schedule and fit in your milestones with the schedule.
- A list of key references
- A preliminary report
- An interim progress report
- A draft pre-final report
- A presentation of your project in the class
- A final report & a master data file

You will be given separate handouts giving details on your report preparation. See enclosed handout giving some topics & guidelines for this project.

### **Group Exercises:**

I suggest a *group size of three-four members*. For the group presentations, each member of the group will be required to present their portions. The students are expected to consider all the group projects (of their group as well as other groups) and the discussions as a part of the course component. All the projects and presentations done as a part of this course will contribute to the overall class learning. Each member is expected to contribute to all phases of all of the projects – be it case analysis, library search, report writing, data analysis, presentation etc. The groups are expected to meet at least once a week, work together and help each other in the process of learning.

### **Class participation & Attendance**

The course is highly interactive in nature. The extent of your learning will depend upon the extent of your preparation for the class and the extent to which you participate in the discussions.

You are expected to do the assigned readings before the class and to participate actively in class discussions. The lectures would only focus upon and summarize the key issues. Without prior preparation and participation, the classroom experience will be unsatisfactory for all of us. Evaluation on attendance and class participation will depend upon your

- Attendance to regular classes and group project presentations
- Active contribution to class discussion: you are expected to question, comment and present your views and insights on the topic being discussed. Through your participation in class discussion, you should demonstrate that you have read the material and given it some careful thought.

## Academic Dishonesty:

Any practices of academic dishonesty would be strongly dealt with. Please strictly comply with the UIC regulations on this matter. Any submissions that have been directly copied from other reports published or available publicly or from others (in other words, if the work was not done by you), internet web sites or published sources will be considered as a case of academic dishonesty. In your project reports, please acknowledge all the sources of your data and information. Based on the individual case, the penalties for academic dishonesty could range from a “fail” grade in the component, and/or “fail” grade in the entire course, and/or university disciplinary action. You will be required to submit a signed declaration for your case report project in this regard (refer to separate handout on project submission guidelines)

## **General Remarks**

- Any communication regarding the course would be sent to you through e-mail/*Blackboard courseinfo*. Please check your e-mails regularly, at-least once in two days.
- All submissions must be type-written. You will also submit an electronic copy of your reports at *Blackboard courseinfo* on scheduled dates.
- All submissions are due at the beginning of class on the dates specified. In fairness to other students, all improper late submissions will be penalized. Late submissions will not be accepted, unless it is a special, emergency situation. You should notify me of this special circumstance before the deadline and should also to provide evidence of this special circumstance.
- If your submissions are found to be unsatisfactory, you will be asked to resubmit your assignments. You will be given specific deadlines for resubmissions and will be required to comply with the same. Depending on your case, the resubmissions might carry a minor penalty in order to maintain fairness to other students.

### Tentative Schedule

Date	Topics	Due
22-Aug	Course Overview & Introduction	
29-Aug	Impact of IT & Internet <i>Case : Canadian Airlines</i>	Proposal for case study project – Updates on contacts with firms
5-Sep	No class	
12-Sep	Understanding Dot-com Strategies <i>Case : Open Markets Inc</i>	Finalization of case study projects A list of references / sources for case study project
19-Sep	Gaining IT & e-business capabilities	
26-Sep	Understanding current technologies <i>Assignment #1: Student group presentations on current technologies</i>	Preliminary report for field project
3-Oct	Organizing for e-Business <i>Case : Boston.com</i>	
10-Oct	Managing IT-based organizational transformation <i>Case : CVS web strategy</i>	
17-Oct	Managing IT-based organizational transformation contd <i>Case : Sears</i>	
24-Oct	IT-oriented Customer Relationship Management <i>Assignment #2: Student group presentations on CRM practices in your case company &amp; industry</i>	Interim report for field project
31-Oct	IT & Supply Chain Management <i>Case : Ford Motor</i>	
7-Nov	Business-to-Business Strategies <i>Case: Illinois Hardware</i>	
14-Nov	Building an IT application portfolio and Assessing IT Performance	
21-Nov	Recent Trends; <b>Student project presentations</b>	Draft final report
28-Nov	<b>Student project presentations</b>	
5-Dec	<b>Student project presentations (tentative)</b>	

\* Individual write-ups on case analysis are due on the dates when the case discussion is scheduled.

All case analysis and other submissions will have to be made both online and off-line (type-written report)

## Readings for IDS 515

Topic	Readings
Introduction & Current State of IT practices in industry	
Understanding the Impact of IT & Internet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poter &amp; Miller. How Information gives you competitive advantage, HBR, 1985.</li> <li>2. Michael Porter, M. Strategy &amp; Internet, Harvard Business Review, March 2001.</li> <li>3. Don Tapscott, Why Michael Porter is wrong about Internet, Strategy +Business.</li> </ol> <p><b>Case Discussion: Canadian Airlines</b></p>
Understanding Dot-com Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.R.M.Kanter. Ten deadly mistakes of Wanna-Dots. HBR, Jan 2001.</li> <li>2. Subramanian Rangan &amp; Ron Adner. “Profits &amp; Internet : Seven Misconceptions”, SMR, 2001, 42(4): 44-53.</li> </ol> <p><b>Case Discussion: Open Market Inc</b></p>
Gaining IT & e-business capabilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building e-business capabilities through partnerships : the transformation from bricks to clicks at Staples, Society of Information Management paper.</li> <li>2. David Feeny. Making business sense of e-opportunity, SMR, Winter 2001, 42(2): 41-52 (chapter.2)</li> </ol>
An overview of current technologies	(Separate set of topics & readings will be provided)
Organizing for e-Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ranjay Gulati &amp; Jason Garino. Get the right mix of bricks and clicks, HBR, May-June 2000.</li> <li>2. Thomas, D., Ranganathan C., Desouza, K. Race to Dot-Com and Back: Lessons on E-business Spin-offs and Reintegration, Information Systems Management, Summer 2005, 23-30.</li> <li>3. Marco Iansiti, F. Warren McFarlan and George Westerman. Leveraging the Incumbent’s Advantage, SMR, Summer 2003.</li> </ol> <p><b>Case discussion : Boston.com</b></p>

Managing IT-based Org. transformation – 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. N.Venkatraman, Five Steps to a Dot-Com strategy, SMR (chapter. 4)</li> <li>2. Wilcocks and Plant. Pathways to e-business leadership. Getting from bricks to clicks., SMR, Spring 2001, 51-59 (chapter.5)</li> </ol> <p><b>Case discussion : CVS web strategy</b></p>
Managing IT-based Org. transformation – 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Angela Andal-Ancion, Phillip A. Cartwright and George S. Yip. The Digital Transformation of Traditional Businesses, SMR, Summer 2003.</li> <li>2. Ranganathan, Goode and Ramaprasad. Managing the Transition to Bricks and Clicks, Communications of the ACM. 2003, 46(12): 308-316.</li> </ol> <p><b>Case discussion : Sears</b></p>
IT & Customer Relationship Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thomas Davenport et al. How do they know their customers so well?, SMR, Winter 2001, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 63–73 (chapter.8)</li> <li>2. Frederick Reichheld and Phil Schefter. E-Loyalty, HBR, July-Aug 2000.</li> <li>4. George S. Day. Creating a Superior Customer-Relating Capability, SMR, Summer 2003.</li> </ol> <p>(Optional) Glen Urban et al. “Placing Trust at the center of your internet strategy”, SMR (chapter.7)</p>
IT & supply chain management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HBR Interview with Dell</li> <li>2. Keith Oliver et al. Beyond Utopia : The realistic guide to Internet-enabled Supply Chain Management, Strategy+Business. 2Q 2001.</li> </ol> <p><b>Case discussion : Ford Motors</b></p>
B2B strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ranganathan,C. Evaluating the Options for B2B E-commerce, Information Systems Management, Summer 2003.</li> <li>2. Steven Kaplan and Mohanbir Sawhney. e-hubs : the new B2B marketplaces, HBR, May-June 2000.</li> <li>3. Richard Wise and David Morrison. Beyond the Exchange : The future of B2B. HBR, Nov-Dec 2000.</li> <li>4. Collaborative Commerce in B2B world : The Sesami story, SIM paper.</li> </ol>
Building an IT & e-business application portfolio and Assessing Performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anthony Tjan. Finally, a way to put your internet portfolio in order, HBR, Feb 2001.</li> <li>2. Anitesh Barua, Prabhudev Konana, Andrew B. Whinston and Fang Yin, Driving E-Business Excellence, SMR, Fall 2001.</li> <li>3. Measuring e-business Success, Forrester report, Sep 2000.</li> </ol>
<i>Recent Trends</i>	(to be announced)

SMR – MIT Sloan Management Review; HBR – Harvard Business Review

Most of the readings are likely to be available through Blackboard Courseinfo web-site

*(Additional readings are likely to be assigned in the class from time to time)*