Readings ReadMe for LM2-IT7723 IT Strategy

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## The IT7723 Story So Far

**In LM1**, we explored definitions, concepts and history of information technology (IT), the IT profession and what it includes and means to be an IT professional. We also prepared to work together throughout the course to increase our skills and capabilities to contribute to the IT profession, e.g., develop an IT Professional Tool Kit. Since IT is so large and ubiquitous, we also set the scope of this course for each of us to focus on IT strategy, IT policy, IT governance and at least one IT subject-matter domain (e.g., database, programming, security, user experience, web, etc.) pertinent to our IT practice.

## Advice on what to do in LM2

After reading A2, the exercise associated with LM2, I suggest spending 2 to 5 hours exploring the readings linked here, e.g., the Wikipedia Series on “Strategy.” Start by reading the root article. Then, note that you probably already have read what Wikipedia has to say about the two Concepts of Business Model and Value Chain; add to that knowledge by reading about the other Concepts. Then read about the Frameworks and Tools associated with strategy. Finally, sample some of the other links in the series. Then, do similar actions for the CIO-Wiki series.

Make sure that as you read that you think about what you read in terms of IT strategy and your IT practice and transfer information as appropriate (with citations) to your A2, D2L Discussion, your IT7723 Tool Kit, your notes in an annotated bibliography, etc.

## What is Strategy?

The Wikipedia page on “Strategy” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategy>) is the main article in the Wikipedia Series on “Strategy”. In the article on Strategy, other Wikipedia pages in the series are linked in the sidebar on the upper right of the page. (The Wikipedia article covering “IT Strategy” is also informative, but not included in this Wikipedia Series on “Strategy,” but can be found here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology_strategy>.) The article on strategy makes the important point that strategy is useful in business decision making because resources to achieve business goals are limited. To me, this is an important function of the organization’s IT strategy with an impact on IT7723: IT strategy should guide the organization’s use of their limited IT resources in maximizing the value of IT to the organization.

## What is IT Strategy?

We now want to focus on IT strategy. To get us started, we have defined initially “IT strategy” as:

Plans to, over the long term, align the IT function with the mission, strategic plans, goals, needs, business model and values of the overall organization and support fulfilling efficiently and effectively its business processes.

In this definition the main function of the IT strategy is *alignment* of the IT with the organization. There are other definitions of IT strategy that you should know about.

Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology_strategy>) defines the more general “technology strategy” as “the overall plan which consists of objectives, principles and tactics relating to use of technologies within a particular organization.” Like our definition, the Wikipedia definition situates IT within the organization. Likewise, the CIO-Wiki definition (<https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/IT_Strategy_(Information_Technology_Strategy)>) situates IT strategy within the organization and also states the main goal of IT is *maximizing and sustaining value* for the organization.

Combining the two thrusts of these definitions, we see that IT strategy needs to align IT with the organization to maximize and sustain IT’s contribution to the organization’s value.

We suggest you spend 30 to 60 minutes exploring the above websites and their definitions and choose or develop your own working definition of “IT strategy.”

## IT Strategy Overview from the CIO-Wiki:

The CIO-Wiki (<https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Main_Page#Chapters>) provides an excellent overview of IT strategy across a number of chapters. Although during this course you will probably want to review the whole CIO-Wiki, we recommend you focus on three of them for LM2:

First, review <https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Business_Strategy> covering business strategy. Exploring and reading this page from top to bottom can help you come to an understanding of the W’s (What, When, Where, hoW, Why, etc.) of a business strategy. At the end (<https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Business_Strategy#Business_and_IT_Alignment>) the page covers the *alignment* aspects of our definition of IT strategy. It also has many fine links to details, methods, techniques, etc. for business-IT strategy alignment such as, the business model, the Five Forces Model, business-IT alignment, etc. Spending an hour or so exploring this page and its links is worth it.

Then, review <https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/IT_Strategy_(Information_Technology_Strategy)> again and explore any of the links on that page that are of curiosity to you. This is worth up to an hour cementing in your mind the creation of IT capability to *maximize and sustain* IT’s contribution to the organization’s value.

Finally, read or skim through at least the CIO-Wiki’s coverage of Enterprise Architecture (<https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Enterprise_Architecture>), which is a main IT framework. Such frameworks help IT professionals understand, explain and justify IT. They provide a rational structure for IT professionals to make decisions and take actions that can maximize IT’s effectiveness and efficiency in making contributions to organizational value.

## How IT adds value to business

Once you have an understanding about IT strategy, develop an understanding of how IT contributes to business value; we have found that understanding Value Chains and Business Models deepens our understanding of how IT adds value to business.

#### Value Chain

The Wikipedia article on the Value Chain (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_chain>) describes a well-accepted framework to understand how organizations implement business strategy to create value; this framework was first articulated in the mid-1980’s by Michael Porter and has grown to help us understand business and commerce in a well-accepted model. Porter’s original model referred to physical objects and the Wikipedia article explains that with the advent of computerization within businesses, the virtual and combined physical-virtual Value Chain models have become predominate; within the virtual and combined value chains, IT plays a critical role in structuring and/or delivering valuable products and services to the market.

#### Business Model

The Wikipedia page on “Business Model” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_model>) describes that part of business strategy describing the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers and captures value. This article describes the advent of what Choudary calls a “liquid business model” in terms of a shift from “pipes to platforms.” In the pipes category, the business activity is linear, e.g., starting from raw materials and ending with outputting a finished product. The KSU cafeteria is an example pipe business model. In the pipes situation, IT is used primarily as part of the production value chain’s infrastructure. In the platform category, Chen points out that IT (e.g., Web 2.0) is required as the platform is a flexible, learning network of producers, providers and consumers. This online or hybrid course at KSU is an example of a platform business model.

## IT Strategic Plans, IT Planning Advice and Process, and Example IT Strategic Plans

Most private organizations want to keep their IT strategic plans internal to the organization, because that increases their security and helps to manage risk. Fortunately for this course, the higher education community and many government agencies make their IT strategic plans public and provide sound advice on IT strategic planning, including templates. Here is a sample:

The State of Georgia’s Enterprise IT Plan for 2025-

Georgia’s IT Strategic Plan is at <https://gta.georgia.gov/enterprise-governance-and-planning-main-page/it-strategic-plan-2025> and is a good read for you, because many of you are residents of Georgia, and all of you are affected by this plan because you are students at KSU, a part of the University System of Georgia. One good way to read it is first look at the graphic on page 2, which covers the Enterprise IT Mission of Georgia; of the five mission paths, find the one(s) closest to your IT practice, and read the details about that path or those paths. If you were interested in an IT job within the State of Georgia, what might you offer to fulfill this plan?

The CIO-Wiki page on the IT Strategic Plan-

The CIO-Wiki has guidance and templates about planning and implementing IT strategy at <https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/IT_Strategic_Plan_(Information_Technology_Strategic_Plan)>. This can help you detail the action steps, details, and deliverables to implement the organization’s IT strategy.

EDUCAUSE Case Study- Strategic IT-

In this October 2018 EDUCAUSE review article, John O’Brien lists the needs of the higher education business environment that will mandate changes in IT strategy on the part of colleges and universities-

<https://er.educause.edu/articles/2018/10/strategic-it-what-got-us-here-wont-get-us-there>

Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council’s IT Plan Body of Knowledge-

<https://ithandbook.ffiec.gov/it-booklets/management/i-governance/ib-it-responsibilities-and-functions/ib6-planning-it-operations-and-investment.aspx>

FDIC Strategic IT Plan-

[fdic\_information\_technology\_strategic\_plan\_2017-2020.pdf](https://www.fdic.gov/about/strategic-plans/it_plan/fdic_information_technology_strategic_plan_2017-2020.pdf)

University System of Georgia (USG) Strategic Plan 2024-

<https://www.usg.edu/strategic_plan/> Although this is not the IT Strategic Plan for the University System of Georgia, the organizational strategic plan depends in many points upon high levels of IT capability. It will be of benefit to you as a student to spend 30 to 60 minutes exploring this site to see where there are rich paths and opportunities for IT contributing to the success of the strategic plan, and this is especially valuable to you if you are a USG employee.

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CIO Wiki (<https://cio-wiki.org/wiki/Main_Page>)

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<https://www.usa.gov/government-works>

### Wikipedia Links (Wikipedia.org)

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