Chapter 1
A Research Journey into Enterprise Governance of IT, Business/IT Alignment and Value Creation

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ABSTRACT

Enterprise governance of IT is a relatively new concept in literature, and is gaining more interest in the academic and practitioner's world. Enterprise governance of IT addresses the definition and implementation of processes, structures and relational mechanism that enable both business and IT people to execute their responsibilities in support of business/IT alignment and the creation of value from IT-enabled business investments. This article introduces important theories and practices around Enterprise governance of IT based on joint research and practical experience of the authors (and editors-in-chief of this journal) within the Information Technology Alignment and Governance (ITAG) Research Institute (University of Antwerp Management School). The article is based on the authors' 8-year journey into Enterprise Governance of IT and aims to outline the core themes of interest of this new International Journal on IT/Business Alignment and Governance. In this way, this introductory article paves the way for many more research initiatives within this challenging research domain.

INTRODUCTION

When you are reading this article, you are looking at the very first article of the inaugural issue of the International Journal on IT/Business Alignment and Governance (IJITBAG). We are very pleased with your interest in this journal and the topics that will be addressed in this and all the forthcoming issues. With this introductory article, we as editors-in-chief do want to share with you our main insights in this challenging research domain, based on our collaborative research and practical experience in the field the previous years.

This research and experience goes back many years, and to strengthen our research efforts, we have founded in 2003 the Information Technology Alignment and Governance Research Institute (ITAG) within the University of Antwerp Management School (www.uams.be/itag). The concept of IT governance was emerging at that time in both academic and practice-oriented literature and definitions and models were developed and promoted. To prevent the IT governance discussion to stay within the IT area, our minds evolved over the years towards the broader—business oriented—concept of enterprise governance of IT. We investigated how contemporary organizations are implementing these concepts in practices, analyzed the impact of these implementations on the complex construct of business/IT alignment and explored the relationships towards achieving more business value out of IT investments.

In this article, we introduce some of our conclusions and insights resulting from these main research streams. We welcome all feedback on steven.dehaes@ua.ac.be and wim.vangrembergen@ua.ac.be and do want to invite you to submit your research articles for consideration in the International Journal on IT/Business Alignment and Governance in the future (www.igi-global.com/ijitbag).

INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE OF IT

IT governance is one of these concepts that suddenly emerged and became an important issue in the information technology (IT) area. It is not clear when exactly the concept originated as we understand it now. Gartner introduced the idea of "Improving IT governance" for the first time in their Top-ten CIO Management Priorities for 2003 (ranked third). In 1998, the IT Governance Institute was founded to disperse the IT governance concept. In academic and professional literature, articles mentioning IT governance in the title began to emerge late 1990s. In the context of the leading academic conference Hawaii International Conference on Systems Sciences (HICSS) IT governance was defined as organizational capacity exercised by the board, executive management and IT management to control the formulation and implementation of IT strategy and in this way ensure the fusion of business and IT (Van Grembergen, 2002).

After the emergence of the IT governance concepts, the notion received a lot of attention. However, due the focus on "IT" in the naming of the concept, the IT governance discussion mainly stayed a discussion within the IT area. We have experienced this in our research many times, where we tried to contact the CEO for an interview on IT governance issues and immediately got transferred to the CIO. In the field, many IT governance implementations are driven by IT, while one would expect that the business would and should take a leading role here as well. It is clear that business value from IT investments can not be realized by IT, but will always be created at the business side. For example, there will be no business value created when IT delivers a new CRM application on time, on budget and within functionalities, and when afterwards the business is not integrating the new IT system into its business operations. Business value will only be created when new and adequate business processes are designed and executed enabling the sales people of the organization to increase turnover and profit. (Van Grembergen & De Haes, 2009; Thorp, 2003).

This discussion raised the issue that the involvement of business is crucial and initiated a shift in the definition, focusing on the business involvement, towards "enterprise governance of IT. As defined in our most recent textbook *(*Van Grembergen & De Haes, 2009*)*, enterprise governance of IT is an integral part of corporate governance and addresses the definition and implementation of processes, structures and relational mechanisms in the organization that enable both business and IT people to execute their responsibilities in sup-

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