Week 1 - Assignment

Skydive Chicago

http://www.skydivechicago.com/

Skydive Chicago is one of the United States' premier skydiving resorts, serving skydivers ranging in skills from first time jumpers to internationally competitive freefly teams. Each student in Skydive Chicago's training program makes a series of progressive training jumps under the direct supervision of a United State Parachute Association Jumper. The training program gears each jump toward teaching one or two new skills. Jumpmasters video their student's jumps. Students use the feedback these videos provide to identify mistakes. They often copy their videos onto a personal tape for future reference. Jumpmasters may also copy well-executed student skydives to the facility's tape library. All students are given access to the drop zone's training room and are encouraged to watch video clips in preparation for their next training jump. This step saves jumpmasters, who are paid per jump, considerable time. Jumpmasters also use these videos to evaluate their training method's effectiveness (O'Brien & Marakas, 2011, pp. 39-40).

In a three page paper (not including title and reference pages) that is formatted according to APA style, respond to parts a, b, and c, integrating concepts and vocabulary from the readings.

a. Describe how this information system benefits the skydiving student.
b. Describe how this information system benefits Skydive Chicago.
c. Create an Information Systems Model similar to Figure 1.19. Be sure to include information about the people, hardware, software, and other resources specific to this exercise.

Be sure that you prepare your Information Systems Model in a software application or tool that can be integrated fully into your MS Word document and submitted to the instructor. Clearly drawn illustrations that are scanned and submitted in PDF format are acceptable with an MS Word document that explains and supports parts a and b. Be sure to label your files clearly. Your paper must include citations and references for the text and at least two scholarly sources.

Many information systems are designed to change in relation to their environments and are adaptive:

- Intelligent software agents, expert systems, and highly specialized decision support systems.

Information systems are systems just like any other system. Their value to the modern organization, however, is unlike any other system ever created.

Components of Information Systems

We have noted that an information system is a system that accepts data resources as input and processes them into information products as output. How does an information system accomplish this task? What system components and activities are involved?

Figure 1.19 illustrates an information system model that expresses a fundamental conceptual framework for the major components and activities of information systems. An information system depends on the resources of people (end users and IS specialists), hardware (machines and media), software (programs and procedures), data (data and knowledge bases), and networks (communications media and network support) to perform input, processing, output, storage, and control activities that transform data resources into information products.

This information system model highlights the relationships among the components and activities of information systems. It also provides a framework that emphasizes four major concepts that can be applied to all types of information systems:

- People, hardware, software, data, and networks are the five basic resources of information systems.
- People resources include end users and IS specialists, hardware resources consist of machines and media, software resources include both programs and procedures, data resources include data and knowledge bases, and network resources include communications media and networks.

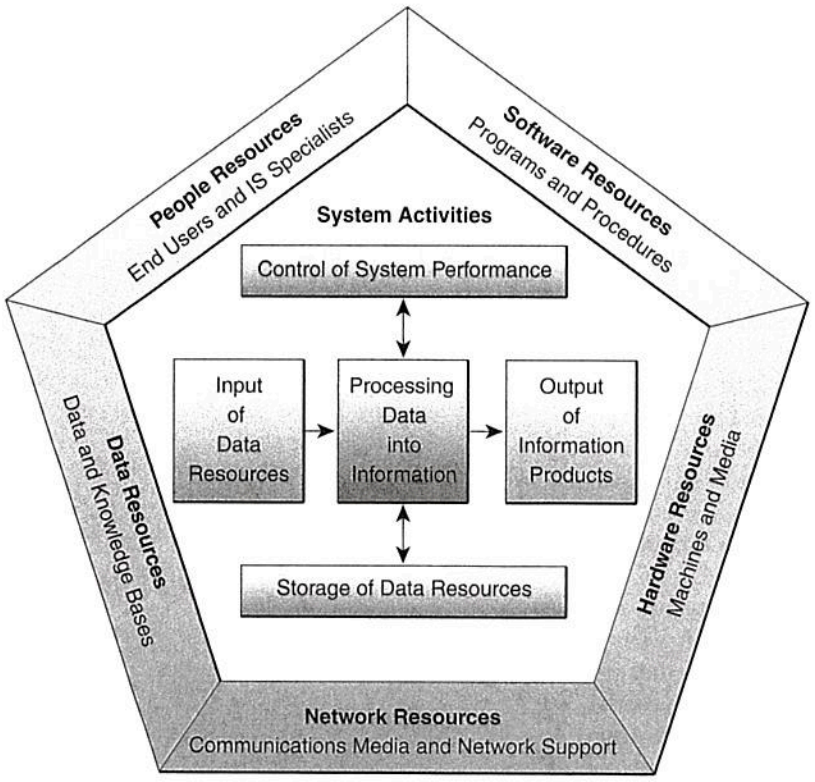

FIGURE 1.19
The components of an information system. All information systems use people, hardware, software, data, and network resources to perform input, processing, output, storage, and control activities that transform data resources into information products.

____ 45. Those systems implemented in order to direct physical conversion processes, such as oil refinement.

____ 46. The second stage of information systems evolution, focused on providing managerial users with information relevant to decision making in the form of predefined reports.

____ 47. A type of operation support systems geared toward the recording and processing of data captured as a result of business transactions.

____ 48. A type of operation support systems that enhance team and workgroup communication and productivity.

Discussion Questions

1. How can information technology support a company's business processes and decision making and give it a competitive advantage? Give examples to illustrate your answer.
2. How does the use of the Internet, intranets, and extranets by companies today support their business processes and activities?
3. Refer to the Real Word Case on eCourier, Cablecom, and Bryan Cave in the chapter. Jay Bregman, CTO and cofounder of eCourier, notes that the company hopes their innovative use of technology will become a differentiator in their competitive market. More generally, to what extent do specific technologies help companies gain an edge over their competitors? How easy or difficult would it be to imitate such advantages?
4. Why do big companies still fail in their use of information technology? What should they be doing differently?
5. How can a manager demonstrate that he or she is a responsible end user of information systems? Give several examples.
6. Refer to the Real World Case on *The New York Times* and Boston Scientific in the chapter, and think about any technology-enabled innovations that you have read about or come across recently. To what extent is innovation about the technology itself, and to what extent is it about changing the underlying ways that companies do business?
7. What are some of the toughest management challenges in developing IT solutions to solve business problems and meet new business opportunities?
8. Why are there so many conceptual classifications of information systems? Why are they typically integrated in the information systems found in the real world?
9. In what major ways have information systems in business changed during the last 40 years? What is one major change you think will happen in the next 10 years? Refer to Figure 1.4 to help you answer.
10. Refer to the real world example about responsibility and accountability for project failures in the chapter. Are these IT projects, or business projects with a significant IT component? Who should be responsible for ensuring their success? Explain.

Analysis Exercises

Complete the following exercises as individual or group projects that apply chapter concepts to real-world business situations.

1. Understanding the Information System

The Library as an Information System

A library makes an excellent information systems model. It serves as a very large information storage facility with text, audio, and video data archives. Look up the definitions for each term listed below and briefly explain a library's equivalents.

a. Input
b. Processing
c. Output
d. Storage
e. Control
f. Feedback

2. Career Research on the Web

Comparing Information Sources

Select a job title for a career you would like to pursue as a summer intern or new graduate. Provide a real-world example of each element in Figure 1.19. You may need to interview someone familiar with this position to find the information you require.

3. Skydive Chicago: Efficiency and Feedback

Digital Data

Skydive Chicago (www.SkydiveChicago.com) is one of the premier skydiving resorts in the United States, serving skydivers ranging in skills from first-time jumpers to internationally competitive freefly teams.

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Jumpmasters may also copy well-executed student skydives to the facility's tape library. All students are given access to the dropzone's training room and are encouraged to watch video clips in preparation for their next training jump. This step saves jumpmasters, who are paid per jump, considerable time. Jumpmasters also

use these videos to evaluate their training method's effectiveness.

a. How can this information system benefit the skydiving student?
b. How can this information system benefit Skydive Chicago?
c. Draw an information systems model (Figure 1.19). Fill in your diagram with the information about people, hardware, software, and other resources from this exercise.

4. Are Textbooks History?

Trends in Information Systems

The wealth of free information available via the Internet continues to grow at incredible rates. Search engines such as Google make locating useful information practical. This textbook often explores the Internet's impact on various industries, and the textbook industry is no exception. Is it possible that free Internet content might one day replace textbooks?

a. Go to www.google.com and use the search box to look up "End user." Were any of Google's first five search results useful with respect to this course?
b. Go to www.wikipedia.com and use the search box to look up "Knowledge worker." Compare Wikipedia's article with the information provided within this textbook. Which source did you find easiest to use? What advantages did Wikipedia provide? What advantages did this textbook provide?
c. Did Google, Wikipedia, or this textbook provide the most useful information about "Intranets"? Why?

5. Careers in IS

Disaster Recovery

"How important are your data to you?" "What would happen if . . . ?" While business managers focus on solving business problems and determining what their information systems should do, disaster recovery consultants ask what would happen if things go wrong.

With careful advance planning, disaster recovery specialists help their clients prevent calamity. Although this topic covers a wide variety of software issues, installation configuration issues, and security threats, examining common end-user mistakes may also prove enlightening. Common end-user mistakes include:

- Failure to save work in progress frequently.
- Failure to make a backup copy.
- Failure to store original and backup copies in different locations.

For each of the common end-user mistakes listed above, answer the following questions:

a. How might this mistake result in data loss?
b. What procedures could you follow to prevent this risk?