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"Model-Driven Software Development"

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Presentation

IT Governance: Fundamentals and Drivers

Dídac López-Viñas, Antonio Valle-Salas, Aleix Palau-Escursell, and Willem-Joep Spauwen

In recent years there has been much talk about IT Governance and the management of organizations in general, which has captured the interest of all those involved in ICT management.

After a number of decades during which ICT has been applied in organizations in a non-harmonized manner, with different aims in each organization, there was a growing realization that, while such technologies should be at the service of business, that is not always the case.

If we were talking about another functional area, such as Human Resources or Accounting, rather than ICT, we

would take it for granted that the activities undertaken by those departments were aligned with the goals of the organization they belonged to, and we would not feel the need, although such a need may exist, to create reference models and methodologies to ensure that they were aligned. However, in many organizations ICT is not adequately aligned with the organization's goals, which may lead to project deviations (negative return on investment, uncontrolled expenses, etc.), or unmanaged risks. This is what has given rise to the concept we know today as IT Governance.

Organizations may be thought of as a coordinated set of

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the world of publishing in which he has collaborated on such publications as *IT Governance: a Pocket Guide*, *Metrics in IT Service Organizations*, *Gestión de Servicios TI. Una introducción a ITIL*, and the translations into Spanish of the books *ITIL V2 Service Support* and *ITIL V2 Service Delivery*. <avalle@abast.es>.

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information systems in which human and material resources participate, but the key to successful organizations resides in the information per se and the way it is automated. Here is where the managers of organizations may question the manner in which that information is processed and the risks they are taking, both as a result of mistakes that may be made and in terms of the cost of not having that information.

Meanwhile, the strategic opportunities afforded to organizations by ICT have given rise to difficulties concerning the management of those technologies. Many companies do not hesitate to describe their ICT departments as strategic or critical to their core activities while at the same time recognizing that ICT causes problems that they hesitate to describe as unmanageable.

Thus ICT departments are often perceived as a pure expense rather than a value-adding resource. They are seldom considered as an opportunity, and investment in ICT is often seen as a technologists' whim, always to be questioned.

Part of the problem lies in the difficulty that managers have in seeing ICT in the company as part of their responsibility and in acquiring the basic knowledge required to take on that responsibility. But the CIOs are also to blame for not understanding organizations and their business objectives, for not taking managerial language on board, for not listening to the real problems of functional managers, and for focusing their goals on technology and not on the practical exploitation of that technology.

We can sum up this general problem as being a difficulty to integrate and align ICT departments' operations and internal organization within the greater organization and its technological goals. The problem also stems from the misconception that general managers have of ICT departments as separate and almost unrelated units due to the technological nature of their role.

Companies and organizations in general need to close this gap between general management and ICT departments by applying management methodologies that will integrate ICT departments within the greater organization and align their operations with corporate goals.

If this gap is to be closed, the managers of organizations need to understand that the ICT department must be managed within the context of business objectives as an inseparable part of the business, and that they need to learn ICT management methodologies. Meanwhile the managers of the ICT department should understand their mission within the context of the company's corporate goals. ICT management should not be seen as a separate goal or discipline, but rather as a cross-functional process affecting the entire organization, one in which everyone should play an active role.

Many organizations are now getting the most out of ICT by understanding and managing the benefits and risks involved, by successfully aligning their ICT strategy with corporate strategy to form a single integrated strategy, by putting in place mechanisms and processes to implement that strategy, including mechanisms to monitor and control ICT systems, and by using metrics to measure ICT manage-

ment performance. The set of methodologies that allows us to achieve the above objectives is what we now call IT Governance.

IT Governance draws on a number of different fields (monitoring and control, audit, metrics, service management, and quality management) to create models identified by such trendy terms as ITIL, Cobit, Val IT, ISO 20.000, etc., and their pertinent certifications. This same trend has also given rise to a great deal of confusion and management by fad with regard to the concepts involved.

The aim of the ensuing monograph is to bring readers up to speed with the latest trends, to show how such trends may be reasonably applied, and to try and explain just what IT Governance is, and what it is not.

Useful References on IT Governance

The following references, along with those included in the articles this monograph consists of, will help our readers to dig deeper into this field.

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Associations

- IT Governance Institute <<http://www.itgi.org>>.
- Information Systems Audit and Control Association <<http://www.isaca.org>>.
- IT Infrastructure Library <<http://www.itil.co.uk>>.
- Information Technology Service Management Forum <<http://www.itsmf.es>>.
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- Pink Elephant. ITIL v3: What You Need To Know <<https://www.pinkelephant.com/NR/rdonlyres/94D620D8-0351-4F9E-82D8-CF033200E8DA/765/ITILv3WhatYouNeedToKnowNA1.pdf>>.
- ITIL.org. ITIL V3-V2 Mapping <<http://www.itil.org/en/itilv3-servicelifecycle/itilv3-v2mapping.php>>.

Web Sites

- The Val IT framework <<http://itgovernance.pbwiki.com/ValIT>>, <<http://www.isaca.org/valit/>>.
- COBIT 4.1 news <<http://www.isaca.org/cobit>>.
- Enabling IT Governance <<http://erp4it.typepad.com/erp4it>>.
- History of ITIL <<http://www.itilv3launch.com/pages/index.html>>.
- ITSMWatch <<http://www.itsmwatch.com>>.
- ITIL Training Zone <<http://www.itiltrainingzone.com>>.
- Troy DuMoulin's blog <<http://blogs.pinkelephant.com/troy>>.
- The IT Skeptic <<http://www.itskeptic.org>>.
- Serge Thorn's blog <<http://sergethorn.blogspot.com>>.
- ICT Governance <<http://www.gobiernotic.es>> (in Spanish).