The Infonomics *Letter*
Plain Language about Digital Leadership and Governance of Information Technology
February 2013 Edition

More Digital Leadership

Hello and welcome to The Infonomics Letter on Digital Leadership and Governance of IT for February 2013.

We are so dependent on technology today, aren't we? Take it away for even a few moments, and we are often helpless. We had one of those experiences at Infonomics on February 28 – the day we should have mailed out this journal. The tree wasn't that old, really – maybe 25 years. It was tall and healthy. It had survived severe drought, and our recent dry spell. But this week it rained – long periods of steady, soaking rain that changed the soil from concrete-like hardness to something quite different – something that offered little resistance to any force. Then came the southerly wind – not strong, but persistent. There may have been a gust. That magnificent tree gracefully collapsed onto the high voltage lines adjacent, and at once the area's residents were again reminded that nature has a way of prevailing. The working day ceased immediately, and production of the February Infonomics Letter deferred until today – with electricity supply restored.

Last month, I opened a new theme for The Infonomics Letter, and a new pitch for my work – with an increased focus on Digital Leadership. It's becoming apparent to me that the organisations which are winning in the transition to the Digital Era are the ones which have a Digital-Savvy leadership team, and do not depend wholly on the innovative insight of their most senior IT specialist. In Digital Leadership and the CIO, I suggest that many IT industry commentators are barking at the wrong tree when they argue that the CIO is the prime mover for digital transformation.

One of our readers asked for some help this month. She's confronted by a situation where her client's senior IT person might be taking them on a dangerous journey, and a digitally unaware leadership may not see the danger signs. No Testing Required looks at the situation she raised.

John Beachboard and Kregg Aytes are doing their part to help build digital-savvy business leaders for the near and more distant future. In Peeling the Onion, I share my thoughts on their book of the same name.

Following postponement of the ACS Education Across the Nation series, it's good to be able to announce a new ISO 38500 Foundation class for ACS Victoria members and friends. Developing Digital Leadership and Governance Skills also announces a commitment to speak on Digital Leadership at the ISACA Conference in South Africa at the end of August.

Until the end of March – enjoy!
Mark Toomey 1 March 2013

Digital Leadership and the CIO.

Last month's major article on digital leadership included a number of points regarding the role of the CIO. It provoked quite some discussion, and clearly it's a topic that warrants further exploration.

There is a strong theme in much of the contemporary IT industry literature suggesting that the CIO should be the focal point for setting an organisation's strategy for use of IT. Last month, I said I have a problem with that idea, and I still do. Let's look at some recent press on the topic before we get to an alternative view.

CIOs leading change

In *CIOs emerge as digital navigators* (Ry Crozier, iTnews, February 7), we see that "Chief information officers have being fingered as the senior executives most likely to guide their organisations to a digitally enabled future state". Well, that's a tall order: to guide the organisation to a digitally enabled future, the poor CIO is going to have to know a vast amount about business – markets, products, regulation, customers, suppliers and so on – at least as much as all the other executives combined, and then some. OK – so the good CIOs know this stuff to at least a working level – but surely not enough to become the leader of a change unlike any that has happened before – from a pre-digital business context to whatever comes next. Think for a moment about the few organisations that have a CIO with such breadth and depth of business experience: what are the other executives going to do? Of course, the idealists would expect that they will all fall into neat ranks backing the CIO, marching to the tune set by the IT specialists. That sounds good, but where did we ever see that happening? As I've watched organisations during my 35 year career, it has seemed to me that top line executives tend to be driven not so much by corporate goals as their own objectives – and that great performance comes from careful attention to aligning personal and corporate goals. Are we now seeing a suggestion that the CIO sets the corporate goals, and that all the other executives will fall in line? Honestly, I can't see that happening either. And did somebody ask about the CEO? If the CIO is now in firm control of the steering wheel, accelerator and brake, what's the CEO to do? Sit tight in the co-pilot seat and rally the troops behind the CIO? Spare me! Don't we pay CEO's to provide the leadership, as well as generate the cohesion? If the CEO has to pass this job to the CIO, then shouldn't we just make the CIO the top executive? But wouldn't that make the CIO actually the CEO?

There's another problem with the proposition Ry Crozier presents: many organisations don't have a CIO. While the CIO role is common in large and

government organisations, it isn't universal. In medium and smaller organisations, formal CIO roles are relatively rare – and the role of IT Manager tends to prevail. Even in a significant portion of major organisations, the CIO is quite removed from the top level leadership, and the CIO plays a relatively low-key role. Mostly, IT Managers have much less breadth and depth of experience – they are technology specialists and they depend on the CEO and other executives for coverage of the non-IT issues. Putting an IT Manager in charge of formulating business strategy probably isn't going to work – unless there is a great deal of help from the rest of the business leadership... which surely means that the IT Manager is not so much leading the planning effort as providing input to it.

Crozier's article justifies its headline with quotes from top line consultants from major firms. He quotes a Deloitte Consulting lead partner positioning the CIO as a kind of "post-digital catalyst" more so than perhaps anyone else in the business executive. The man from Deloitte apparently regards digital innovation as the combination of cloud, mobile, social, analytics and security elements, thereby requiring someone with enough domain knowledge to tie the pieces together to derive an appropriate business benefit. Well that's interesting – these technology matters are certainly part of what I would be thinking about to position the digital future – but they are far from the only elements in the game? What about the fundamentals of business – customers, the business model, the value proposition, the competitive advantage? What about finance and people, and the non-technology resources? What about competitive behaviour and consumer trends? Sure – technology may now be a key consideration for the future – but it's not the only consideration. It might be good to have somebody bring the digital era technologies to the business planning table, but don't think for minute that the technology expert is in a position to paint the entire future scenario, at least in a majority of cases.

Market-driven Change

Another view comes from Julian Bajkowski in *CIOs take over C-suite* (Australian Financial Review, 19 February). He suggests that "the mantle of technology leader is again at the crossroads, thanks to the ruthless rise of online commerce, cloud computing and social media". Bajkowski tells us that where once CIOs were sidelined but still needed to guide the rest of the executive team to "guide systems procurement and overhauls", the "massive disruption wrought by customers and employees clutching their nearly ubiquitous smartphones" now means that the CIO is a vital part of the executive leadership. He reports on the advice given to CEO's by global search firm Egon Zehnder International: "that they have to provide the right environment for technology talent to thrive if they want to survive in the new economy", with "a genuine opportunity to succeed, a clear mandate for change, organisational support, a sufficient budget and a career path".

Reading further in Bajkowski's article, it becomes clear that Egon Zehnder does not necessarily see the CIO operating alone, or even in the lead role. They position the critical leadership as a triangle, comprising the chief executive, CIO and a new role – the "chief digital officer", whose job is usually to develop online strategy and vision. Hmmm – a leadership team for the digital era comprising, perhaps even under the overall leadership of, the CEO, together with a technology specialist and an online business specialist. That's perhaps sounding a bit more like it – presuming of course that the "chief digital officer (CDO)" is not just another narrowly focused technologist, but is in fact a savvy business leader who just happens to properly understand the way markets are evolving and the way that innovative use of digital enablers can create new opportunity.

Bajkowski puts heavy emphasis on the customer facing aspects of the digital revolution and the Egon Zehnder proposition for a CDO seems well matched to that context. However, the customer space is not the only one where digital transformation is happening. In reality, innovative organisations of all kinds are exploiting digital technology to enable many more kinds of change. The military uses aircraft operated by remote pilots; mining companies use similar technologies to operate ore trains from offices on the far side of the continent. Newshounds use essentially the same technology to snoop in back yards, and infrastructure operators can survey remote installations in exactly the same way, employing massive data comparison technologies to spot differences with much greater accuracy than the human eye. In another space, we have seen factories that were once reinvented to use robots instead of people in repetitive tasks now facing up to the potential for another reinvention as 3D printing becomes more sophisticated and viable. In banking, technology-enabled leadership is not merely a matter of the front-line customer interface, but of the engines that sit behind to manage the customer accounts. In Australia, Commonwealth Bank is pummelling its major competitors now not merely because it has great customer facing applications like Kaching, but because it has invested heavily in the back office as well, building and implementing a real-time, heavy duty core banking system that operates its "financial services factory".

What these illustrations aim to show is that it's not just the front line that's important. Organisations that win in the digital era are planning and delivering enabling technologies right across their business models, and they are reinventing their businesses as they go. A Chief Digital Officer may be a good idea, but perhaps the mantle of digital leadership needs to be more widespread through the executive.

CIO priorities

Another angle on this topic comes from *CIOs talk about their top priorities for 2013* (Rebecca Merrett, CIO, 20 February). She says that Commonwealth Bank's Michael Harte is focused on extending the bank's innovation capability and culture, in which "teams regularly collaborate and ideas are constantly being circulated". The article makes it pretty clear that building innovation culture extends to all personnel and even some outsiders, and is most certainly not focused inside the IT function. It sounds remarkably like Commonwealth Bank is working to spread digital leadership not just through its executive ranks, but throughout the entire bank.

Australian Treasury CIO Peter Alexander is presented as illustrating CIOs who seek opportunities to grow the business. The emphasis is on collecting and analysing "big data" in an effort to discover opportunities for treasury to source input on economic conditions and suchlike from social media as well as, or instead of, traditional sources. That sounds good, but there's an aspect that worries me a little – the way the story is written doesn't give me any reason to believe that Alexander has the interest, let alone active participation of his executive colleagues and the rest of the organisation in this work. Might he come up with amazing possibilities that languish because they don't fit the agenda of other, more traditional, executives?

Merrett's article goes on to talk about the agendas and activities of three other prominent CIOs. While each of them is clearly competent in their role, it doesn't seem to me that any of them are taking the lead in business transformation. Their activities range from delivering technology that matches the routine needs of the organisation to focusing on business outcomes rather than merely technology outcomes, and recovering years of neglect.

The activities of these CIOs are all important tasks: but only one of the five – Commonwealth Bank's Michael Harte – comes across from the article as being truly engaged with a business that is pursuing digital leadership and innovation across all parts of the organisation. Treasury's Peter Alexander is clearly researching digital opportunity, but there's nothing in the article that gives any confidence about enthusiastic participation of his executive peers. Perhaps they are enthusiastic and participating, but if they were, I would have expected the article to make a big thing about the aligned effort that is going to drive major change. As written the article seems to paint a scene more like a small band of intrepid explorers searching for El Dorado. The other three are doing what one would expect of a competent senior CIO – but it doesn't seem that they are driving the digital agenda through to the point of delivering significant business transformation.

The fearless CIO

ING Direct CIO Andrew Henderson was quoted in *"Fearless" CIOs get the funding* (Brett Winterford, iTwire, 28 February) as saying "Australian CIO's need to be 'fearless' if they wish to have their innovation programs sponsored".

Henderson is probably right when we consider present day conditions. But are those conditions right? Why would a CIO need to be fearless? What would a CIO have to fear – especially when putting up a proposal for some innovative use of IT? Might it be that the fear to which he refers is a fear that the proposal won't be accepted by a leadership team and a governing body that does not understand, and does not engage in digital leadership? Would the CIO have any cause to be fearful if the same proposition were being delivered by the CEO, with the ringing endorsement of the rest of the executive team? Frankly, if I were a CIO going out on a limb to propose something that had no peer executive support, I'd be out looking for a new job. Regardless of how good the proposal may be for the organisation, the fact is that digital transformation involves much more than technology, and an initiative that does not have substantial leadership support is going to at best struggle when it touches on the responsibilities of the executives who are not engaged.

Tomorrow's Digital Leaders

Chief Information Officers have an important part to play in the future of their organisations. Arguably, it's a greater part than the play now, if only because their organisations have a far greater dependence on digital information and communications technology than ever before, and that dependence can only increase. But to expect the CIO to be the leader and prime mover of digital transformation is, in my not so humble opinion, nonsense. And to expect every organisation to have a CIO – well that's a bit too much as well.

Look again at the Commonwealth Bank example. Michael Harte may well be one of the most respected and capable CIOs in Australia at the present time – but he is not the leader of Commonwealth Bank's digital transformation. That title falls squarely on the shoulders of now-retired CEO Ralph Norris and his current-day successor, Ian Narev. Both men are extremely digital-savvy and have a firm understanding of how the core engine-room of the bank's financial manufacturing systems are just as important as the customer facing systems. Under their leadership Commonwealth Bank has transformed itself – not just in its technology, but in virtually every other aspect of its business operations. The transformation is palpable, and evidenced through many more customer and competitor touch-points than just its front line and core systems. While we don't know the precise approach that was used, it's a pretty safe bet

that the vision of years ago that is today's reality was not just a CIO vision. It would have been a whole-of-executive vision, nurtured by a tech-savvy and visionary CEO, argued comprehensively and adopted by a board that would have comprehensively understood the extent of change and the risk associated.

Some will say that Commonwealth Bank had a unique advantage – that it's CEO was also a CIO. And it's true – Ralph Norris was once (according to Julian Bajkowski) a "code cutter", and a successful CIO. But Ralph Norris was much more than a CIO. He was a CEO whose career development had included substantial time dealing with and understanding information technology, as well as time coming to grips with the myriad other disciplines that a CEO must understand in order to provide well-rounded leadership. Norris would not have been second-guessing his CIO – but he would surely have been ensuring that his entire executive team worked in a coherent manner to understand the bank's digital future and to deliver the organisation-wide transformation needed to deliver and build on the digital foundations.

Cases like the ones we cited last month of organisations that have stumbled in transition to the digital era show strong signs of top executives and boards which not only did not understand, but which refused to engage with the concepts of the digital future. And while there are plenty of negative examples, there are also many positive cases of organisations that thrive in the digital era. Looking into those organisations shows a consistent thread: their leadership teams are digital-savvy, but they are almost always also consummate business leaders, well versed in all of the critical disciplines required to build and run a successful enterprise. Further, Digital Leadership is not confined to the executive teams: the opportunity to innovate is driven out into the organisation. We see a useful illustration of this in *NYPD, Microsoft create crime-fighting tech system* (Colleen Long, The Age, 22 February 22). The article profiles the Domain Awareness System, which has been built in a partnership effort between the New York Police Department and Microsoft, and points out that it has been "created by cops for cops". According to one analyst quoted in the article, "This is the kind of stuff you used to only see in movies. Getting it to work in a way that police departments can use in real time is huge." It's actually hard to imagine that such a system could have been conceived and delivered in a way that works so well, unless there had been considerable engagement from all levels of the organisation. Perhaps it's also interesting that the article does not make any mention of the NYPD CIO or internal IT functions at all. Is NYPD an example of an organisation where Digital Leadership happens without the CIO being front-and centre? I wonder!

Digital transformation will continue at a furious pace for many years ahead – not just because organisations are far behind their potential in respect of already-available technology, but because the relentless pace of technology evolution and development is opening the doors of opportunity faster than many organisations can adapt and change. The organisations which win in this environment will not be the ones that have the most outstanding individual technologists, but the most effective digital-savvy leadership teams. These will be the teams that can accurately identify the digital era opportunity and deliver the corresponding business opportunity faster, cheaper and more effectively than their competitors. They may well need business-savvy technologists – but they will be much more dependent on technology savvy business leaders!

Our challenge at the dawn of the Digital Era is simple to express, and challenging to deliver: to understand and develop technology savvy business leaders who will in their turn respect and enable the business savvy technology leaders as part of a cohesive leadership team that can sustain the organisation as it ascends the digital cliff-face.

The Question for Directors

Does your organisation have the technology-savvy business leadership team that will be needed to guide it safely and profitably into the digital future? If not, are you prepared to meet a similar fate to that of HMV, as described last month?

No testing required?

A long-time reader of The Infonomics Letter has encountered a problem. To protect anonymity, we'll call this reader Jane. Here's what Jane wrote:

> *Where in the (ISO 38500) standard does it talk about parallel runs and reconciliation between systems as a mitigation to the risk of changing from one system to another?*
>
> *I have been asked to manage a project. The IT manager insists that a parallel run is unnecessary and that auditing the data and reconciling between the two systems is also unnecessary. I'd walk away from the project but they have been good clients of ours for nearly twenty years and slapping in an untested system could destroy their business.*

The short answer for Jane is that ISO 38500 is at a much higher level. It doesn't mention testing, let alone parallel runs. However, it does provide the context for dealing with everything that's worrying her, and I have endeavoured to tease all of this out in my book, *Waltzing with the Elephant*.

ISO 38500 is intentionally designed so that it cannot be used as a "cook book". Rather, it should be used as a "thinking stimulant". When guidance on IT is presented as a detailed formula, it can be far too easy to blindly follow the step-by-step procedures and

forget about the other factors that might come into play. Local conditions, experience and behaviour of people, how long it has been since the organisation undertook a similar task, even the impact of regulatory requirements can influence how organisations tackle any given IT task. Indeed, it can even be legitimate to regard some aspects of testing to be "optional" – but when the consequences are well understood and when there are appropriate contingency measures in place.

My initial advice for Jane looked at testing in the context of four of the six ISO 38500 principles…

Responsibility: Jane didn't mention the type of system, but I think I'm in a safe place to assume that it's an important business system. There should, therefore, be a clearly identified business owner. If there isn't, now is the time to get the ownership in place. It should be fairly easy – which C-level executive is going to hurt if the project goes wrong? That person should have the ultimate call, not just on parallel running, but on when the system actually goes live. There may also be a steering committee, and if there is, the committee chair should be that same business owner. The committee should have a charter that clearly defines its role and authority, as well as its membership. Neither the project manager, nor the IT manager, should be members of that steering committee – but both should be in attendance and providing input. The project manager should report to the steering committee and take direction from it. The IT manager should provide advice, and validation of IT aspects of what the PM is saying, but should not be an active decision-maker. The steering committee and the business owner should determine, based on expert advice and its own assessment of the situation, just how much testing should be undertaken, and when the test results comprise an acceptable level of reliability, accuracy and performance to justify a go-live decision.

Acquisition: Any plan for investment in IT-enabled business change must address more than the technology component. The work to be done to implement IT-enabled change almost always includes substantial non-technology aspects – such as changes to procedures, to job roles, to policies, to organisation structures and to the skills of people. Proper testing of a new system should test not just the technology, but the technology in its intended business context – to establish whether or not the entire change operates as intended. The testing plan should provide for this whole-of-business testing and should ensure that there is confidence not just in the technology, but in the entire system.

Performance: Making sure that a system works properly is fundamental to meeting the expectations of this principle. It really demands a quite robust approach to testing, validation and sign-off. What are the acceptance and go-live criteria for the new system, and who has the signoff? If the signoff is not controlled by the system owner, one has to ask why – because any other choice means that somebody who is not accountable for the result can take an unacceptable risk.

As mentioned earlier, *Waltzing with the Elephant* explores the meaning and application of the guidance in ISO 38500. It discusses a wide range of topics throughout the business cycle of IT, and includes many checklists that business owners and those in oversight roles can use to understand what should be happening and to check if proper attention is being given to important tasks. One of the book's discussions on testing (page 197) says:

> *"Hasty implementation of new systems and of changes to systems is one of the primary causes of information technology losing integrity. Pressure of deadlines, lack of appropriate tools and resources, and over-confidence are the fatal combination that typically leads to running a business on systems that do not have integrity. While careful design and construction are the roots of a system that works properly, there is only one route to proving the performance and that is testing – thorough, comprehensive, rigorous, relevant testing.*
>
> *There are many recorded case studies of new systems that failed to perform correctly after initial installation, where the subsequent review has discovered that under budgetary and timetable pressure, the project manager, steering committee and perhaps others had determined either directly or by implication of a related decision to reduce the extent of testing.*
>
> *None of us would fly as a paying passenger in a new jet aeroplane that had not undergone rigorous tests and inspections on the ground and in the air, and that did not have applicable type approval and certificate of airworthiness. Nor would we knowingly participate in the maiden voyage of a new cruise ship if that ship had come direct from the construction dock to the passenger dock without intervening extensive sea trials. So why do we confidently install complex software which few eyes actually see without a determined effort to prove that it will operate as intended, producing correct results at all times, including when operating under stress?".*

Conformance: Ideally**,** Jane's client organisation should have overarching policies that define what should happen in respect of testing. If they exist, what do they say? Do they encourage inappropriate risk-taking? If they don't exist, what is the unwritten rule? Is there a lack of clarity that results in inappropriate risk-taking? Surely it's not an unreasonable expectation that an organisation has a basic set of rules to cover this – after all, decisions to deploy IT-enabled change can have significant impact,

and there is an extensive body of experience-based evidence that tells us of the potential negative consequences of putting untested and poorly tested systems into operation.

On a different front, one must also examine the business conformance obligations that would be served by the new system. Are any of these at risk if the new system fails, and what are the consequences of such failure?

Human Behaviour: One aspect of human behaviour is that willingness to take unnecessary risks, especially by those not on the accountability chain. An IT manager insisting that a parallel run is not necessary may be taking an unacceptable risk – or may not – it depends on the context. What is the benefit of not doing a parallel run? What is the risk? What alternatives exist? There should be a rational case made for or against such testing, and the real stakeholders should make and sign off on the decision. That of course depends on identifying – who are the real stakeholders? It starts with the business owner we discussed above – but who else should be involved? Who else really needs the system to work properly from the outset?

To help Jane make a case to her client, I also suggested that she quote case examples which can be found on www.infonomics.com.au.

Australian Customs Service (A catastrophe in Governance of ICT): The technology aspects of this system worked – not perfectly, but well enough if other problems had not been introduced. Customs had done very poorly in preparing the marketplace business users ("customers" of customs) for introduction of the system, and they conducted a "sudden death" all-or-nothing cutover that gave zero room for dealing with anything that did go wrong. While Customs may well have tested the software, and perhaps even their internal business process, they clearly had not adequately tested the entire business system. Had they done so, they would have had hard evidence confirming the issues raised by the marketplace in the weeks before the system went live.

Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (A Salutary Lesson): API went live without a parallel run, and did not discover that the data conversion had "lost" 50% of the year's profits until two months after cutover, by which time it was too late to recover. While the investigation never found a cause, it is highly likely that the problem was that some of the data was not in the original system at all – but rather in spreadsheets and other "non-sanctioned" software that had not been identified and so had not been taken into account when planning the switch. A parallel run would, most likely, have alerted API to the problem that eventually resulted in the CEO, CIO, CFI and Audit Committee chairs losing their jobs and shareholders losing 40% of their investment.

Queensland Health: Among the MANY problems in this project, there was a comprehensive failure to test the software and the overall system. While the software in this case had serious problems, the exacerbating factor was that the manual and organisational aspects of the payroll systems had been totally changed as well, but there was no testing at all to prove that the manual activities would work as intended. They didn't work, and the faults in the software were massively exaggerated as a result.

And despite the clarity of the Queensland Health experience, we are now aware of another major government payroll that is going awry – this time in New Zealand. Reports suggest that one reason the system produces incorrect results is that the manual processes for collecting payroll data are not working as expected – something that should have emerged during comprehensive whole-of-business system testing, such as could have been done with a well-designed parallel run.

The challenge Jane faces in respect of this project may be indicative of a more deeply seated problem. It looks, from the limited information that has been presented, as if there is a problem with assignment of responsibility. If the wrong people are making key decisions for this project, what does this suggest about decisions that may already have been made regarding not just this project, but about the organisation's overall use of IT? Along with poor allocation of responsibility, poor practice and poor behaviour affecting a project can be indicative of an organisation-wide problem. Non-conformance to the ISO 38500 principles in the context of a project may well indicate an opportunity for the organisation to improve its behaviour, capability and performance across all aspects of IT use.

Jane's key problem may not be so much the preferences of an adventurous or perhaps poorly-disciplined IT Manager, but a lack of awareness and technology savvy on the part of the organisation's overall leadership. Instead if tackling the IT Manager, I think that a better approach in this, and many similar cases, is to educate the rest of the leadership team about how it can operate effectively to ensure that IT-enabled change is properly targeted and effectively delivered.

One way to subtly introduce ISO 38500 is with an Infonomics Project Health Check, which uses structured interviews and document reviews to provide a view on what is needed to assure confidence in a go-live decision.

Question for Directors

Do the policies which guide management decisions about testing of IT systems on which the business

relies give you confidence that your organisation is in fact safe from unacceptable, avoidable failure of existing and new IT systems? Top

Peeling the Onion

Digital Leadership needs technology-savvy business leaders. John Beachboard at Idaho State University and his colleague Kregg Aytes at Montana State University are contributing to development of technology-savvy business leaders with their recently published book: *Peeling the Onion: IT Governance and Management for Business Managers*.

It was a pleasure for me to work with John Beachboard as a sounding board and reviewer for this very useful piece of work. Of course, it's great that he has quoted me in the book. But what's more important is that the book works and is an important part of the massive task in front of us, to remove the shrouds of mystery from IT and make it accessible to business leaders.

Now it's a pleasure to encourage readers of The Infonomics Letter, and all who are interested in effective governance of IT to add Peeling to the Onion to your list of essential resources. Here's my pitch:

> *"Information Technology is now an indisputably essential tool of business. But the value of the tool does not come from how the tool is delivered: Rather it is substantially dependent on how the tool is used – and determining how a business tool is used is entirely in the domain of business leadership. No longer can we abdicate to IT specialists the task of finding the optimal use of the IT tool – that job now lies squarely in the court of the business leaders. In* Peeling the Onion, *Beachboard and Aytes offer business leaders a fresh and meaningful perspective on how they can engage with the established IT supply regime, to drive the IT agenda and focus it on measurable, valuable business outcomes, with acceptable risk. The book provides useful perspective on how the necessary business leadership is an integral part of any organisation's approach to governance of IT. As such, it also helps organisations to understand and adopt the international standard for governance of IT, ISO/IEC 38500".*

Peeling the Onion is published by Informing Science Press and is also available at Amazon in eBook format. There is a useful review at Book renter. Top

Developing Digital Leadership and Governance Skills

It's good to be able to announce a number of opportunities for Infonomics Letter readers and their colleagues to further explore the essential knowledge and skills required for effective Digital Leadership and Governance of IT.

18 – 19 April 2013: ACS Victoria Branch: ISO 38500 Foundation. The well-established two-day foundation class prepares business and IT leaders with insight to the key messages, principles and fundamental tasks presented in the standard. It is jargon-free and helps build clarity on the essential relationship between business and technology specialists for organisations navigating into the Digital Future. This event is especially relevant for people working in the Victorian Government, given that ISO 38500 is explicitly identified as best-practice guidance for governance of IT in the state's recently announced ICT Strategy. Details and registration are here, or email Daphne Kechagias or phone the ACS Branch at +61 3 9690 8000.

26 – 27 August 2013: ISACA South Africa IT Governance, Information Security, IT Assurance and Risk Management Conference at Emperors Palace, Johannesburg. I'm delighted to have been invited to speak at this event. My session abstract will read: *Digital Leaders are using IT to redefine not just their own business, but the markets and competitive landscapes in which they operate. They are seeing and harnessing the potential in IT to do business differently and to create new businesses from scratch. Rapid emergence of the digitally transformed market drives new questions: what are the essential skills and capabilities of a Digital Leader? How can Digital Leaders operate effectively? How can organisations put themselves on the front foot and be Digital Leaders, rather than Digital Disasters?* Top