Welcome to INFM 620, *Introduction to Strategic Information Management!* The syllabus provides a roadmap for the course; *please read it* before you begin. Please also access the other materials on the course web site.

If you have *any* questions, please contact me by e-mail.

## 1. Introduction

**Course objectives.** The catalog description of the course: “Defining and identifying strategic information in an organization. Characteristics of strategic information management, including the principles, practices, issues, and programs involved with the strategic management and protection of information in organizations.” Course objectives include:

- Identify data, information, and knowledge and how they are used in organizations
- Understand how to define and identify strategic information in organizations
- Understand the role of strategic information in leading and directing organizations; in decision-making by members of an organization; and in developing new products and offering services
- Understand how to organize and administer effective strategic information management programs
- Explore major issues in the field

**Course entirely online.** This course is offered entirely online via the University’s Enterprise Learning Management System (ELMS), asynchronously (i.e., there are no specific times when you need to be online). ELMS is based on the Blackboard electronic learning system. It is user-friendly, easy to learn, and very easy to use! Teaching and learning via ELMS will be a rich and rewarding experience. Before you begin, if you’re
not familiar with ELMS, which uses the Blackboard system, there are three places to get a quick orientation:

- University of Maryland Office of Technology/Academic Support: http://about.elms.umd.edu
- Blackboard’s web site: http://www.blackboard.com
- The Introduction to ELMS on the course web site

If you have problems with ELMS, please call 301-405-1400, Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. through 5:00 P.M. or e-mail: elms-support@umd.edu. If you have other questions or problems, please let me know. You can reach me via e-mail from the course web site.

Please use the ELMS Assignments Tool (linked from the course menu) for submitting your weekly assignments and research paper. All assignments are due by midnight on the due date.

We will use the following online discussion forums (also called “discussion boards” in the course. The first two are substantial; the third, a one-time post; the fourth entirely voluntary.

Weekly Discussion Forums, described below, for discussions in those weeks where we have discussions of unit topics.

Group Project Forums for discussion of the group project reports in Units 13 and 14.

Class Bio Forum. We’d like to get to know you! Please begin by writing a one-page mini-biography with information that you are willing to share with your colleagues in class: your name, where you are in the program, career goals, subject area interests, and what you hope to get out of this course. This will help me and your colleagues in class get to know you. Please post to the Class Bio Forum by Feb. 5.

Strategic Information Management Issues Forum. This is an informal forum; participation is entirely voluntary. You may use it to ask other students’ opinions (for instance, advice on sources for your research project or to seek advice on strategic information management issues you may be facing at work) or to share news about publications or new developments in the field.

Code of Academic Integrity. In all of the work for the course, students must abide by the University’s Code of Academic Integrity. Please review this at: http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html.
**Assignment deadlines.** You should have plenty of time to carry out all the work, particularly given the fact that you don’t have to travel to class or spend time in classroom sessions. Work must be submitted by the established deadlines. However, if there extenuating circumstances, such as illness or computer problems, please let me know in advance and we will work something out.

**Staying in touch.** I will assist and guide you as the course begins and provide guidance and feedback as we move along. I will use the *Announcements* tool to disseminate information to the class, including information about the course schedule, syllabus or assignments. It will appear on the front page of the course each time you log into ELMS. I will sometimes e-mail the class as well. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail, bdearsty@umd.edu, anytime about any question or issue you may have. I will respond right away.

## 2. Readings

*Books*

These three books are available at the University Book Store or you may purchase them via Amazon.com or in any other way that is convenient for you. *Please note that you will be reading selected chapters from each of these books*, not the entire book.


*Articles and other readings*

Articles are available online and can be accessed via the University Library’s access port. Accessing the articles is easy:

Click on the web site for McKeldin Library: [http://www.lib.umd.edu/MCK/mckeldin.html](http://www.lib.umd.edu/MCK/mckeldin.html)

In the top line, click on “Research Port” (you may want to bookmark this for convenience)
Select “University of Maryland, College Park”

Enter your 14 digit ID number from the University and your last name

You can select databases by subject or name. These databases may be particularly helpful:

Quick Search  
Article First  
ABI Inform  
Academic Search Premier  
Business Source Complete  
Emerald  
Google Scholar

It is to your advantage to become familiar with these and other University databases; you’ll need them for your research paper in this course and for your other courses here at CLIS. Try various databases to identify those that work best for you.

For each article in the syllabus, I’ve suggested one database to bring up the article most directly (usually, Business Source Complete). I suggest typing in the full title of the article; that seems to work better in some cases than entering the author’s name.

Articles from the Sloan Management Review may be accessed via Google or, for your convenience, they are also posted on the Course Documents section of the course web site under the heading Sloan Management Review Articles.

If you have any problems, contact the Library (a good place to start is their Ask Us! page: http://www.lib.umd.edu/help.html), or let me know

Other items are available on the web by clicking on the URL noted in the syllabus. All the URL’s were checked just before the syllabus was posted. But occasionally they change without notice. If one does not work, try typing the title into Google, and usually it will come up. If not, please contact the professor.

3. Assignments and Grades

Course assignments fall into three categories -- weekly assignments, group projects, and an individual research paper – discussed below. You have considerable leeway on when you actually complete the assignment but there are established submission deadlines. Please note that there are no face-to-face meetings and no exams in this course.
1. Weekly Assignments

A. Read unit lecture notes (no grade for this assignment). Please read the unit lecture notes posted in the Course Content folder, linked from the Course Menu. The lecture notes provide my interpretations and insights, summarize other experts, and supplement the readings. They also provide a partial basis for the weekly discussions. If you have questions about the lecture notes, please e-mail me.

B. Read all the assigned unit material and (for 6 of the units) submit a short Unit Written Assignment. Please note that there are written assignments for 8 of the units but that you need to complete only 6 of these, your choice. That is, you can skip two of the written assignments, based on your interests, time, and other factors. For those you select, you need to submit a short essay (no more than 6 pages, double spaced) via the Assignments Tool for several of the weekly units.

Each week when a submission is required, there will be one of two types of assignments:

A short essay based on a selected topic

OR

Reading Reflections based on the readings. For the Reading Reflections, please address this question:

What are the author’s main points and thesis?

And as many of the following questions as possible:

How does the reading deepen or broaden your insights?
How do your personal experience or observations confirm or refute what the author is saying?
What did you agree with, disagree with, and why?
Any topics that are not clear, or where there is insufficient (or too much) detail?
What other questions or issues does the material raise but not address?

If there are multiple articles and reports in a particular week, you need to read all of them but you may focus on two of the readings which you find particularly interesting and useful.

Please submit using the Assignments Tool on the course web site.
C. **Participate in several weekly online discussions for Units 2-11.** There is a weekly online topical discussion for several units. It is easy to contribute to and participate in these discussions.

The online discussion takes place continuously from Wednesday, 8:00 AM each week through Saturday, midnight each week (4 days). This timeframe is intended to give you plenty of time to read the material before the discussion begins. You are encouraged to log on to the discussions as often as possible during this period, and to participate as fully as possible.

The objective is to have an informative online discussion – an exchange of opinions, insights, observations, and other thoughts that broaden and deepen our understanding of the topic. It is intended to demonstrate, and provide you with experience in, online discussion and problem-solving, a technology-based approach that is used increasingly in organizations.

Your postings should address the question at hand, based on the readings for the week, the lecture notes, your own experience (as an observer, participant, or practitioner), and your own insights and opinions.

You need to post in each of these weekly discussions at least **three times.** More are welcome but are not required.

One post, the first day (Wednesday) should reflect your own perspective, experience, and opinions and the readings and lecture notes for the week and provide substantive comments on the issue under discussion. If you have experience in information programs and care to share it in a reflective way, that is helpful. If not, please just rely on the readings, lecture notes, and your own general insights. Everyone’s views are welcome – and required!

One of your posts may be based on an outside article, report, news item, or other source that you access – something beyond the assigned readings – if you wish. The source needs to be related to the topic of the week. Please provide a citation (author, title, journal name, date, pages and if appropriate URL) a link if appropriate, summarize the item, provide your perspective on it, and integrate it into the discussion.

One post may be a response to what another student has posted if you wish. But if you respond to someone else, the response needs to go beyond just indicating agreement or disagreement; it needs to add to the
discussion by indicating the reasons for your position, thereby continuing the discussion

Posts on the last day, Saturday, particularly toward the end of the day, become marginally useful because your colleagues in the course do not have time to consider or respond to them.

Please post during the appropriate week; early or late postings will not count and won’t benefit your colleagues in class.

Your postings should be concise, focused, carefully proofread, and should use appropriate, respectful language even if you are registering disagreement with someone else’s point. I have provided some other informal advice for online discussions: Suggestions for Online Discussions on the course web site.

Depending on class size, we may have more than one discussion board forum on the same topic each week.

Your participation in each of the weekly discussions is a requirement of the course.

The grade for the discussions will count for 20% of the final grade

2. Group Projects

We will divide the class into teams, based on class size and in part on the interests you express in your biographical sketches in the Class Bio forum. Each of the teams will be given a problem or issue in the area of strategic information management and will need to submit a report that analyzes the issue and advances some proposed solutions.

To the degree practicable, I will try to tailor the group assignments and the case studies to meet your interests as expressed in the Class Bio forum, and to release the case studies by Feb. 12.

Each team will be assigned collaborative workspace in ELMS with four tools: discussion, file exchange, e-mail, and virtual classroom. Each team needs to select a team chair, and you may organize and proceed as you wish. You may collaborate online, use e-mail, meet face-to-face, rely on an outside tool such as Google Docs, or all of the above. Each group will need to carry out some outside research, as appropriate.

The group project report, no more than 10 pages, double spaced, should include references and citations to particularly helpful articles, interviews, and other sources that the group used. It should also pose, at the end, 2-3 questions or concerns to get the online discussion started.
During the final two weeks of the course, Units 13 and 14, the class will discuss the reports online, launching the discussion from the 2-3 questions that each group poses in their report. Everyone is expected to participate in the discussion, but we will need to work out the mechanics depending on class size and the number of teams and reports.

The group reports must be submitted by April 22. Please send them as attachments to e-mails to everyone in the course, and also post them in Units 13 and 14 so that they will be convenient for the discussion.

The online discussion will take place during Units 13 and 14.

*Preparing the group project report will count for 20% of the grade for the course. The grade will be awarded to each group.*

*Your comments on and discussions of the group project reports will count for 10% of the grade.*

3. **Short research paper on a project management topic of interest to you**

You need to complete a short research paper (no more than 20 pages, double spaced) on a topic related to strategic information management. The topic should be one that is of interest, reinforces your career goals, and is focused enough that you can carry out the research in the time available during the semester and handle it in a paper of this length.

The topic needs to be approved by me. Please send me a proposal by ELMS e-mail by Feb. 5. The proposal can be short – a page or less should be enough -- and should address the following:

- Your name
- Title of the topic
- A short description of it (a few sentences), including researchable questions—the topics or issues you expect to explore (of course, these may change when you actually begin your research)
- Initial list of sources – titles of a few books, journals you expect to consult (you don’t need to cite specific articles for the proposal), web sites, etc. This does not need to be a long list; just enough so that it is clear that a critical mass of source material exists.

I will respond by e-mail with approval or suggestions for changes. *I advise you to begin working on the research paper as soon as you receive approval so you don’t have to rush at the end.*
The paper must be well organized, clearly written, carefully proofread, present a clear thesis or argument, include appropriate footnotes in proper form, and include a bibliography that notes sources consulted.

The final version of the paper is due by May 14; late papers are not acceptable. Please be sure to put the title of the paper, your name, and “INFM 620” at the top of the first page and follow the file-naming conventions posted in the Assignments folder.

*The paper will count for 25% of the grade.*

### 4. Course Units

*Please keep on schedule!* It is essential that you keep up with the work each week and not fall behind. If you’re having any problems keeping up or have any questions, please let me know by e-mail.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1. Strategic Information Management: Introduction</th>
<th>Jan. 24-29</th>
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*Lecture notes:* Strategic Information Management: Introduction (in the “Course Content” section of the course web site)

*Readings:*


*Unit written assignment:* None this week

*Online discussion topic:* None this week
Lecture notes: Need and Opportunities in Information Management (in the “Course Content” section of the course web site)

Readings: Please read any four of the following:


Unit written assignment: Reading Reflections (due Wednesday, Feb. 2, midnight). (Please note: whenever there are multiple readings assigned, as there are this week, you need to select only two for your Reading Reflections.)

Online discussion topic (Feb. 2-5): This week’s readings and lecture notes describe a number of problems and issues in the management of information in and by institutions. What do you believe are the root causes of these problems, and why? As leaders of
information programs in institutions, what policies and strategies would you expect to develop and put into effect to deal with them?

**Unit 3. The Information Proficient Organization**

**Feb. 6 - 12**

*Lecture notes:* The Information Proficient Organization (In the “Course Content” section of the course web site)

*Readings:* Please read any four of the following:


*Unit written assignment:* None this week

*Online discussion topic* (Feb. 9 - 12): What are the most important features of “information proficient” organizations? As a CIO or director of an information program
within an organization, what can you do to promote these features? What do you see as the chief obstacles, and how would you overcome them? What arguments would you use to convince a CEO to support development of information proficiency within the enterprise? How would you measure success?


Lecture notes: Chief Information Officers: Issues and Challenges (in the “Course Content” section of the course web site)

Readings: Please read any four of the following.


Unit written assignment (due Saturday, Feb. 19, midnight). Based on the items you selected and read this week, and citing them as appropriate, please indicate what you regard as the top three challenges, and the top three opportunities, facing CIO’s, and indicate why you feel these belong at the top of the list.
Online discussion topic: None this week (combined with Unit 5)

**Unit 5. Chief Information Officers: Strategic Approaches**  Feb. 20-26

*Lecture Notes:* Chief Information Officers: Strategic Approaches (in the “Course Content” section of the course web site)


*Unit written assignment* (due Wednesday, Feb. 23, midnight): Reading Reflections (please focus on the assigned chapters as a whole)

*Online discussion topic* (Feb. 23-26): The material in Unit 4 concentrated on issues, challenges, needs, and opportunities. The reading and lectures this week focused on how CIO’s should conceptualize and carry out their responsibilities. How well do the strategies recommended in the notes and book this week address the issues that were defined in Unit 4? How should CIO’s define success? What strategies should they pursue in your view that are not discussed in either Unit 4 or Unit 5, and why?

**Unit 6. Information Systems Projects**  Feb. 27-March 5

*Lecture notes:* Information Systems Projects (in the Course Content section of the Course web site)

*Readings:* Please read any *four* of the following:


*Unit written assignment:* None this week

*Online discussion topic* (March 2 – 5): Based on the lecture notes, the readings you selected, and your own observations and experiences with project management if any, what do you see as the most critical success factors in information systems project management? What are the most probable problems? What factors make these projects different from other types of projects?

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**Unit 7. Information Program Plans**

**March 6-12**

*Lecture notes:* Information Program Plans (In the “Course Content” of the course website)

*Readings:* Please see Written Assignment, below

*Unit written assignment* (due Saturday, March 12, midnight): Please provide an assessment of any two of the following documents. Do the documents seem clear, realistic; how close to meeting the traits laid out in this week’s lecture notes? Are there clear measures? What is missing? How would you improve them? What insights does reviewing these materials give you into how to develop information policies and plans?


• Commonwealth of Virginia Information Technologies Agency (these four count as one):

  
  *Status Update* (2009)
  
  *Results of Stakeholder Workshops* (2006)

  *Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, Alignment With Stakeholder Results* (2007)


• Library of Congress, *Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2013*. [http://www.loc.gov/about/strategicplan/2008-2013/StrategicPlan07-Contents_1.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/about/strategicplan/2008-2013/StrategicPlan07-Contents_1.pdf) (The discussion of values and strategies may be of particular interest.)

  http://www.doi.gov/ocio/strategic_plan.html

• Any other information plan or policy document that you identify

*Online discussion topic:* None this week

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<th>Unit 8</th>
<th>The Learning Organization</th>
<th>March 13-19</th>
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*Lecture notes:* The Learning Organization (in the “Course Content” section of the course home page)


*Unit Written Assignment:* None this week

*Online discussion topic:* (March 16-19: Does the concept of “analytics” seem valid to you? Please indicate why or why not. What are the main information management implications of analytics? What role(s) should information professionals play in leading and assisting their organizations in developing and applying analytics strategies outlined in the book?)

March 27-26. Spring Break. Enjoy!

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<th>Unit 9</th>
<th>Collaborative Information Technologies and Tools (1). March 27-April 2</th>
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*Lecture Notes:* Collaborative Information Technologies and Tools (1) (In the “Course Content” section of the course web site)

*Readings:* Please read any *four* of the following:


The Economist, *A World of Connections: A Special Report on Social Networking* Jan. 30, 2010. [http://www.economist.com/node/15351002?story_id=15351002](http://www.economist.com/node/15351002?story_id=15351002) (This is a short report; a menu on the report web site has links to more detailed reports that are based on this report. Please read any that interest you.)

*Unit Written Assignment* due Saturday April 2, midnight: Reading Reflection on any two of the readings

*Online discussion topic*: None this week

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**Unit 10. Collaborative Information Technologies and Tools (2) April 3-9**

*Lecture notes*: Collaborative Information Technologies and Tools (2) (in the “Course Content” section of the course web site)

*Readings:*


And any **two** of the following (your choice):

Josh Bernoff and Charlene Li, “Harnessing the Power of the Oh-So-Social Web,” MIT Sloan Management Review 49 (Spring 2008), 36-42. (Access via Google; type in the title of the article OR access from the Sloan Management Review Articles section of the course web site)


Andrew McAfee, "Will Web Services Really Transform Collaboration?" MIT Sloan Management Review 46 (Winter 2005), 78-84. (Access via Google; type in the title of the article OR access from the Sloan Management Review Articles section of the course web site)


Unit Written Assignment: Reading Reflections, due Wednesday, April 6, midnight.

Online discussion topic (April 6 - 9): This is a relatively new topic so definitions, concepts, guidelines, and applications are less settled than for some of the other things we discuss. Please address these issues in the discussion: are collaborative technologies and tools something new, or variations on things from the past? What is their potential to change the way people work and the way businesses operate? What are the chief information management issues and, as an information manager, how would you deal with them?
Unit 11. Audit, Legal, and Regulatory Issues April 10-16

*Lecture notes:* Audit, Legal, and Regulatory Issues (in the “Course Content” section of the home page for the course)

*Readings:*


*Unit written assignment* Due Saturday April 16, midnight. Your choice of A or B:

A. Reading Reflections based on the assigned chapters in the book

OR

B. *Information Nation* is mostly about legal compliance but it also outlines sound precepts for records and information management. If you were Chief Information Officer of a company, how would you use the “keys” in this book? How would you convince the CEO to support a program embodying them? How would you work with counsel’s office and convince managers and supervisors to require/support what the book advocates? Any themes/keys that you would emphasize in particular? Anything that you would add?

*Online discussion topic:* None this week

Unit 12 Your Interests/Looking Into the Future April 17-23

This is a special unit. Please submit an essay of approximately 6 pages, double spaced, on either (A) or (B), below. Due Saturday, April 23, midnight.

A. Please identify, analyze, and discuss what you believe will be the top *three* issues in strategic information management 3 years from now, 2014. Several of the earlier readings in the course will be useful but you will need to do some additional research and cite it in your paper. Some of the following may also be useful. But the sources are entirely up to you.

http://armablog.typepad.com/informationoverload

Nicholas Carr, *Rough Type.* http://www.roughtype.com


Charlene Li’s blog. http://www.charleneli.com/blog

Andrew McAfee, *The Business Impact of IT*. http://andrewmcafee.org/blog


OR

B. Select an issue or topic related to strategic information management that is of interest to you. It needs to be something of relatively modest scope and different from the one you selected for your research paper and the ones we are covering in the group projects. You will need to carry out appropriate research, but it cannot be extensive given the amount of time you have. Write an essay (approx. 6 pages, double spaced) describing the topic, identifying the chief issues, and setting forth the main insights you draw from the research about how you would approach the issue or topic as manager of an information program.

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<tr>
<th>Unit 13. Group Project Report Discussion</th>
<th>April 24-30</th>
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<tr>
<th>Unit 14. Group Project Report Discussion</th>
<th>May 1 - 7</th>
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2/5/11