

# INFORMATION SYSTEMS in organizations

**PEOPLE, TECHNOLOGY, and PROCESSES**

Patricia Wallace

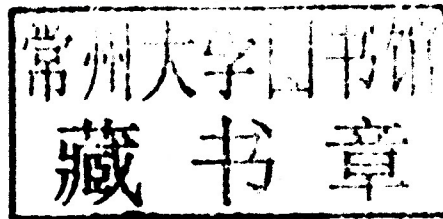


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Johns Hopkins University



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# INFORMATION SYSTEMS in organizations





To Callie, Julian, and a bright future  
of human-centered computing.

# About the Author

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# Preface

## Introduction

How can we engage our students in the *real* world of information systems, beyond the smartphone apps, cool web sites, and lively games they already know? To capture their attention and turn them on to this fast-moving (and well-paid) field, we need a stunningly current text with examples and topics that reach right into their lives. It should offer tips they can use *now* to gain their own competitive edge, and it should prepare them to land running when they enter a fiercely competitive job market. They should converse intelligently on their first interview, familiar with the jargon and heated debates, on topics such as business intelligence, text mining, social network analysis, e-learning, net neutrality, 4G, cloud computing, and black swans. And the text should do all of this efficiently, not in 600+ pages. For example, with the convergence of information and communications technologies, combining hardware, software, and telecom in a single chapter with enterprise architecture as the umbrella shows students the whole picture in an efficient way.

The text should also show why this field is as much about people as it is about technology. (Having been a CIO and head of an IT department much of my career, along with holding a Ph.D. in psychology and M.S. in computer systems management, I relearn this fact daily.) As for online supplements, PowerPoints and talking-head videos are helpful, but why not creatively apply some of our disruptive innovations to teaching? We should have interactive, role-playing simulations that draw students into realistic and sometimes tense situations where they make difficult choices that have consequences.

## Key Features: What Makes This Text Different?

### THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

This text takes a fresh perspective on the introductory course in information systems, one that combines comprehensive and up-to-date coverage with a stronger focus on the human element. It covers all the major topics for the course in a rigorous way, without skimping on any of the fundamentals. But it enriches those topics with probing discussions about the roles people play in building, shaping, implementing, and sometimes obstructing information systems. In the chapter that covers disaster recovery planning (12), for instance, students learn how to avoid common cognitive biases as they assess risks. In the chapter on collaborative technologies (8), readers gain insights about how different technologies and communication channels can unexpectedly alter the impression they make on others. They learn how to choose the best channel for each task to support virtual teamwork, management, negotiation, and leadership. Another chapter (9) shows how the human element can hinder attempts to capture intellectual capital because employees perceive more incentives for hoarding knowledge than for sharing it.

The processes and policies that people devise to manage information systems also receive more attention in this text. For example, students learn how organizational policies about appropriate use and ownership come about, and what impact they have on how employees use the systems (12). They find out that legal liability for workplace harassment drives employers to use surveillance, more so than qualms about “cyberslacking” (10). The book stresses how the four components of an information system—people, technology, processes, and data—are interconnected,

