

THE FUTURE OF ACADEME – A VIEW FROM THE U.S.

Abstract

The university – as we know it – is under serious threat. Universities are being forced to undergo change at an unprecedented rate. Some of this change is undoubtedly good, but at the very core of this change are some issues that need careful consideration.

In this talk, I will explore some significant issues which we as academics need to think about. In particular: is there a future for Universities; Colleges of Business within them; and IS departments? What is driving this concern over the future of universities? I'll look at issues such as competition (from where: low cost producers – India, China, etc.; Industry run units – McDonald's University; Private, on-line universities – University of Phoenix, etc.; Paper mills – Century University); sources of revenue (state funding, student tuition, research grants, endowments/ donations, executive programs, consulting, etc.); disruptive technologies (i.e. technologies enabled by the internet, Web2.0, etc.).

Lastly, I shall try to articulate what I see as the 'rules' of this new game, and suggest 'whose rules are they?' The talk will concentrate on the financial issues associated with university survival and where these drivers are coming from. It will not address issues such as philosophy of education, history of education/research, or types of knowledge that universities generate.

Biography

Professor Rudy Hirschheim (BA, MSc, PhD, PhD hon.) is the *Ourso Family Distinguished Professor of Information Systems* in the E.J. Ourso College of Business, Louisiana State University. He has previously been on the faculties of the University of Houston, Templeton College - Oxford (UK), London School of Economics (UK) and McMaster University (Canada). He has held visiting appointments at Monash University (Australia), University of New South Wales (Australia), University of Bayreuth (Germany), University of Jyväskylä (Finland), University of Warwick (UK), University of Linz (Austria), University of Cape Town (South Africa), University of Aarhus (Denmark), and University of Paris-Dauphine (France).

Professor Hirschheim has just stepped down as Senior Editor for the *Journal of the Association for Information Systems* and is on the editorial boards of the journals: *Information and Organization*; *Information Systems Journal*; *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*; *Journal of MIS*; *Journal of Information Technology*; and *Strategic Outsourcing*, and has previously been on the boards of: *European Journal of Information Systems* and *MIS Quarterly*. He was VP for Publications for the Association for Information Systems.

In 2006, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Oulu (Finland). And in 2007, he was made "Fellow" of the Association for Information Systems.