Launching A Comprehensive Review of MSIS 2006: Panel Discussion

AIS SIG-ED: IAIM Annual Conference
Milan, Italy
December 14, 2013

Heikki Topi, Bentley University
Al Harris, Appalachian State University
V. Ramesh, Indiana University
Rolf Wigand, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Recent Conversation Related to MSIS 2006 Revision

- Topi, Helfert, Ramesh, and Wigand. “Future of Master’s Level Education in Information Systems,” *CAIS*, 2011 (Based on an AMCIS 2010 panel)


- Topi, Conboy, Donellan, Ramesh, Van Toorn, and Wright. “Moving Towards the Next Generation of Graduate Degree Programs in Information Systems,” accepted for publication at CAIS (based on 2011 IAIM panel)
Formal Process To Review and Revise MSIS 2006

- Proposals to AIS (Council) and ACM (Ed Board) in Fall 2012 to start the process of reviewing the need for MSIS 2006 revision; both approved

- Task force named in late Fall 2012: Al Harris (AIS; AIS SIG-ED), Ramesh Venkataraman (AIS), Heikki Topi (ACM), Rolf Wigand (ACM); work launched in ICIS 2012

- Data collection and analysis in Spring and Summer 2013; Final report to ACM and AIS in August 2013

- Preliminary approvals from both organizations in Fall 2013 pending budget process outcomes
Highlights of Task Force Report

- Four sources of data:
  - Survey sent to 100 MSIS program directors in the U.S.
  - Request for unstructured feedback sent to the AISWorld mailing list
  - A structured benchmark analysis of MSIS 2006 compared to 26 leading U.S. programs
  - A structured benchmark analysis of MSIS 2006 compared to 12 non-U.S. MS programs in IS
Highlights of the Analysis

• Overwhelming support for a need for the revision by respondents

• Respondents generally had found MSIS 2006 to be a useful resource

• Several significant differences between the practices of the leading programs and MSIS 2006
  • Three major questions regarding the core:
    • Data and database management
    • Business intelligence / analytics
    • Management of the IS / IT function
  • Areas currently excluded that will need careful consideration:
    • Big data analytics / data science
    • Cloud computing and virtualization
    • IS controls and IS management frameworks
    • Social media
Highlights of the Analysis

- Curriculum analysis revealed a wide range of variation in the program structures; at the highest level, one of the major distinguishing factors was the differential focus on IS management vs. information technology.
- It is difficult to identify a shared intellectual core of the leading MS programs in IS.
  - Are we as a field able to communicate clearly to the prospective employers what they will be getting when they hire an MSIS graduate?
- Globally, the practices vary even more than within the U.S.
- Need for curriculum / pedagogical innovation both at course and program level.
Foundational Elements to Consider in the Revision

- Competency-based design
- Immersion of IT in business
- Appropriate balance between IT and business
- Continued importance of foundational skills
- Career-focused orientation
- Career tracks
- Capstone experience
- Local vs. global and national perspective

Source: Topi, Conboy, Donnellan, Ramesh, Van Toorn and Wright, \textit{forthcoming in CAIS}
One Possible Conceptualization

Source: Topi, Conboy, Donnellan, Ramesh, Van Toorn and Wright, *working paper*
Steps Moving Forward

- AIS Council’s final decision in December 2013
- ACM’s budget process in February-March 2014
- Formation of the project steering committee within the next 2-3 months; 4 members from both ACM and AIS
- Preliminary work in Spring and Summer 2014
- Formal project launch in August 2014 (pending budgetary approvals)
Thank You!

- Please contact Heikki Topi (htopi@bentley.edu) or Ramesh Venkataraman (venkat@indiana.edu) for any comments, questions, and expressions of interest
Earlier Graduate Model Curricula in Information Systems


