

## EDITORIAL

# A Vision to the Meeting Path of Practitioners and Researchers on the Governance of IT

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The governance of Information Technology (IT) has increased in importance because organizations base their core business activity on IT. Organizations are moving from enabling the business through IT to creating new business with IT, obtaining more value from the original mechanisms widely known in the research literature about the IT governance topic. At the same time, the governance of IT standard ISO/IEC 38500 tried to guide IT governance, based on the need to normalize best practices and behaviours on governing the current and future use of IT in any organization regardless of its environment, mechanisms or frameworks they have adopted. Thus, different organizations may adopt different approaches to implement IT governance and therefore governance frameworks may differ in design between different organizations. But organizations have confused IT governance with IT management for a long time.

This error can be attributed to the blurred line between governance and management, maybe partially due to there are many definitions of what IT governance is and how it differs from IT management, each having different approaches. This situation is exacerbated due to IT being now a major business driver for organizations of all sizes, supporting not only their core business, but also seamless integration with supply chains and interactions with customers. As cloud-based IT has matured, the mechanisms for delivering IT and IT-based services have changed significantly. Additionally, the availability of data is exploding and there is a tremendous need to refocus corporate governance on its use. There are also amazing changes in the way IT is delivered and supported within the organization, with internal IT acting as an integrator for externally sourced systems. All of these new aspects are challenging the past and current definitions of IT governance and its practice (see Table 1).

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**Table 1.** Some Governance of IT definitions

IT Governance is the selection and use of mechanisms, e.g., joint ventures with vendors, strategic alliances, joint R&D for new IT capabilities, etc. for obtaining the required IT competencies <sup>[1]</sup> .
IT governance arrangements refer to the <i>patterns of authority for key IT activities</i> in business firms, including IT infrastructure, IT use, and project management <sup>[2]</sup> .
The <i>authority</i> for resources, risk, conflict resolution, and responsibility for IT is <i>shared</i> among business partners, IT management, and service providers <sup>[3]</sup> .
CIOs engagement in business planning and focus on the <i>optimal matching of IT resources</i> will better <i>support business strategies</i> and ensure that business strategies properly reflect IT role. CEOs engagement in IT planning will ensure the <i>maximum return from IT</i> and realize its <i>strategic value</i> <sup>[4]</sup> .
IT governance is the responsibility of the board of directors and executive management. It is an integral part of enterprise governance and consists of the leadership and organizational structures and processes that ensure that the organization's IT sustains and extends the organization's strategies and objectives <sup>[5]</sup> .
IT Governance specifies the <i>structure and processes</i> through which the <i>organization's IT objectives are set</i> , and the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance <sup>[6]</sup> .
IT governance is the framework for the <i>specification of decision rights and responsibilities</i> to promote <i>desirable behavior in the use of IT</i> <sup>[7]</sup> .
IT governance is a framework for <i>leadership, organizational structures and business processes</i> , standards, and compliance with these standards, which ensures that the organization's <i>IT supports and enables</i> it to achieve its <i>strategies and objectives</i> <sup>[8]</sup> .
IT governance is the <i>responsibility of boards</i> who set structures like IT committees to <i>make IT decisions</i> , assign duties, develop policies considering organization's operational and <i>strategic needs, avoid risks, and improve its competitive position</i> <sup>[9]</sup> .
IT governance is the choice organizations make when <i>allocating decision rights</i> for IT activities such as selecting and prioritizing projects, <i>assuming ownership</i> of technology, and <i>controlling budgets and IT investments</i> <sup>[10]</sup> .
IT Governance is the <i>strategic alignment of IT with the business</i> such that maximum <i>business value is achieved</i> through the development and maintenance of <i>effective IT control</i> and accountability, performance management and risk management <sup>[11]</sup> .
The IT governance criteria should include <i>business strategic planning, IT strategic planning, reporting</i> to organization <i>structures, budgetary control, IT investment management, steering committee(s), and prioritization processes</i> <sup>[12]</sup> .
Effective IT governance provides <i>mechanisms</i> that enable IS/IT management to develop integrated <i>business and IT plans</i> , allocate <i>responsibilities</i> , and prioritize IT initiatives <sup>[13]</sup> .
Enterprise Governance of IT is an <i>integral part of corporate governance</i> and addresses the definition and implementation of <i>processes, structures and relational mechanisms</i> in the organization that enable both business and IT people to execute their responsibilities in support of <i>business-IT alignment</i> and the creation of <i>business value from IT-enabled business investments</i> <sup>[14]</sup> .
IT governance essentially places structure around how the organization's IT strategy aligns with business strategy <sup>[15]</sup> .
IT governance provides better IT support to organizations robustly in <i>achieving business objectives</i> , optimizing business in IT investment, managing opportunities, mitigating IT-related risks <sup>[16]</sup> .
IT governance is about <i>controlling the strategic impact of IT</i> and its <i>value delivery</i> to the business <sup>[17]</sup> .
IT is an integrated part of top managers' responsibility towards the society and political directives to ensure the <i>reasonable, effective, and efficient use of IT to support public goals and interests</i> <sup>[18]</sup> .
IT governance is a <i>board and top-executive responsibility</i> focusing on <i>business performance and capability</i> , not on technical details and consistent with broader models for the guidance of the governance of organizations and access to business leaders without specific technical skills <sup>[19]</sup> .
IT governance formalizes and clarifies the <i>allocation of responsibilities and decision rights</i> for a wide range of IT strategy, integration, resource, and control activities <sup>[20]</sup> .
IT governance is the system by which the <i>current and future use of IT is directed and controlled</i> <sup>[21]</sup> .
IT governance is a repeatable, rational process to collect ideas, select <i>projects</i> and prioritize the implementation of these ideas and projects <sup>[22]</sup> .
IT governance is interested in the <i>delivery of value</i> derived from digital transformation and the <i>mitigation of the business damage</i> that results from such digital transformation <sup>[23]</sup> .
IT governance is the process organizations utilize to prudently organize their <i>IT investments</i> in a way to guarantee that funding of programs, projects or operations is <i>accomplished most efficiently</i> <sup>[24]</sup> .

Thus, IT governance research and practice have been covering, in the latest twenty-five years, different important aspects of governance, but also identifying several gaps to research <sup>[25]</sup> mainly the ones devoted to the communication mechanisms among the governance bodies and middle managers and its effectiveness, precisely the social aspects in communication approaches, human behaviour, knowledge sharing, culture, leadership, partnership, collaboration, participation, understanding, and engagement. Another possible research gap in empirical research would be the deployment of IT governance solutions in both developing and public institutions different from public universities since most of the IT governance studies rely on private companies in developed countries. But maybe the most expected issue should be how difficult is to implement the governance. This may be because of the diversity in the different existing definitions, the disparity of the particular practitioners' solutions, the flexibility to implement the IT governance framework that best suits them without specifying one in particular derived from the standard, or just the contrary when some commercial solutions are based on an extensive list of processes, making it overly cumbersome to implement. In any case, the meeting path between practitioners and researchers is marked by these challenges in recent years, where the IT used by businesses has been revolutionized due to considerable changes in the supply and use of technology. This was accelerated by the consequences of the COVID-19 lockout due to expectations of users and organizations who want to easily and smoothly collaborate with companies through IT.

### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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