Journal of Information Technology Education: Discussion Cases

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JITE Discussion Cases (JITE-DC) is a repository for discussion cases that relate to Management Information Systems (MIS), Information Technology (IT), Informing Science (IS) and related fields. The four shared characteristics of these cases are:

1. *Designed for Discussion:* JITE-DC cases offer a detailed perspective on a situation that leads up to a set of decisions or plans that need to be developed by students over the course of their preparation and discussion. They are not intended to be examples or illustrations about which an instructor can lecture. They are not designed to be in-depth extended word problems that students "solve". They are built as showcases for specific technologies or techniques of the sort that frequently appear on vendor sites.
2. *Authentic:* They describe, as accurately as possible, real world situations. While specific aspects of a case may be disguised at the request of organizations or individuals involved in the case, the situations described in the cases have actually occurred and been verified by the case writer. JITE-DC does not publish case studies involving constructed or hypothetical situations.
3. *Open:* Case studies are sometimes categorized as "open" or "closed". A closed case has an intended solution, the "right" answer. For open cases, such a tidy resolution rarely exists. There will nearly always be a variety of resolutions that are "good", and many more that are unlikely to succeed.
4. *Free:* They are available for use by all, under a Creative Commons license. Educators may use the cases in their classroom and make the cases files or printed copies available to their students at no charge.

These four characteristics distinguish the JITE-DC from other outlets. While a number of publications and conferences include "teaching cases", many times these cases are constructed as examples, as opposed to being designed as a basis for discussion. Other repositories, such as the well-known *Harvard Business School* case collection, emphasize open and authentic discussion cases. They are, however, very expensive to use. It is our hope that by making our cases free, we can encourage their diffusion throughout the global community, including areas still in the early stages of economic development.

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#1: ISM4300 AND THE CASE METHOD
Grandon Gill

An undergraduate class is taking its first course taught using the case method. They are asked to decide a variety of issues related to course design. *This case is intended as a prototype for instructors who are similarly teaching students unfamiliar with the case method. An MS-Word version is available from the author for faculty members wishing to create their own version specific to their class.*

#2: WEBPISTON: CHOOSING A NEW STRATEGY
Grandon Gill and Ricardo Lasa

A successful web hosting company that targets small businesses sees major changes on the horizon for the web-hosting industry. It needs to choose between several possible strategic directions, some of which would involve major changes to the company's focus.

#3: LEE-EN CHUNG: SHOULD I HAVE A WEBSITE?
Grandon Gill

A construction engineer who operates a consulting business for builders, investors, bankers and owners needs to decide whether or not it makes sense for her to create a website for her business. In making the decision, she must weigh her current approach to acquiring clients to one involving greater emphasis on the web.

#4: INFINITY COMPUTER SOLUTIONS: RAMPING UP
Manish Agrawal and Grandon Gill

A computer services firm has been expanding rapidly into new businesses, such as voice-over-IP (VOIP) and virtualization. The owner is increasingly feeling time pressure and needs to hire one or more new employees. He must decide how to go about searching for someone, first deciding whether to seek someone with experience or someone he can train.

#5: INNERSCOPE RESEARCH INC.
Grandon Gill

A five year old neuro-marketing research firm has established an enviable portfolio of clients and has demonstrated the effectiveness of its patented "emotional engagement" algorithm for combining biometric signals. It has seen the cost of its services rising, however, and slower-than-expected growth as a result of the recession. It must now decide whether it should continue to focus on its consulting activities or if it should aggressively develop a product that can be administered by other firms.

#6: WISH FARMS: FINANCING FIRETAG
Grandon Gill

One of the nation's largest strawberry producers has developed a robotic laser system for marking cases of produce shortly after they are picked in the field. The system offers many advantages over current labeling approaches and seems well timed in light of a *Produce Traceability Inititative* being voluntarily adopted by growers and retailers. The company must decide how to market this technology, complicated by the seasonality and diverse nature of produce.

#7: PATHFINDERS EUREKA
Grandon Gill

Based on technologies that it first pilot tested during the Gulf oil spill, a disaster management firm has developed a cellular-based tool for acquiring and managing geocoded information. The owner believes that the technology could also become a viable social media platform that interfaces with other platforms, such as Facebook. Given its limited resources, the company must decide how to balance its efforts between emergency management or social media, and decide whether to focus on delivering a product or a service.

#8: USF WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
Grandon Gill, Kathleen Long, and Dennis Walpole

The *University of South Florida*, the nation's eighth largest public university, has decided to move from its current system of relatively unconstrained website development to a content management system (CMS) for non-course sites. The case revolves around two key decisions: 1) how to choose between existing CMS platforms, 2) how to manage the roll-out of the system, given the inertia likely to be experienced in an organization where many of the participants are tenured faculty.

#9: SELLING EBOOKS TO THE HOME SCHOOL MARKET
S. Sanchez-Murphy, W. Murphy, Grandon Gill

A small business, with considerable experience in multi-media training development, has acquired a portfolio of textual content appropriate for the home school market. The husband and wife partners must decide how to produce the content—as an eBook or an app—and what platforms to support. Complicating the situation are the health issues of one of the owners and challenges already experienced in getting content approved by distributors such as iTunes and Amazon.

#10: NATION TECHNOLOGIES
Manish Agrawal

An individual with extensive security experience has developed a new approach to encryption that focuses on protecting and tracking individual documents as opposed to safeguarding the channel. There are many possible industries that could benefit from the approach, including healthcare, finance, education and government. He must decide how to focus his marketing efforts, e.g., by industry, by region, or by company size and how to price the technology.