

The Business of Systems Integration



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Over the past decade or so, systems integration has become a key factor in the operations, strategy and competitive advantage of major corporations in a wide variety of sectors (i.e. computing, automotive, telecommunications, military systems and aerospace). Systems integration is a strategic task that pervades business management not only at the technical level but also at the management and strategic levels. This book shows bow and why this new kind of systems integration has evolved into an emerging model of industrial organization whereby firms, and groups of firms join together different types of knowledge, skill and activity, as well as hardware, software and human resources to produce new products for the marketplace. This book is the first to systematically explore systems integration from a business and innovation perspective. Contributors delve deeply into the nature, dimensions and dynamics of the new systems integration, deploying research and analytical techniques from a wide variety of disciplines including the theory of the firm, the history of technology, industrial organization, regional studies, strategic management, and innovation studies. This wealth of research capability provides deep insights into the new model of systems integration and supports this with an abundance of empirical evidence. The book is organized in three main parts. The first part focuses on the history of systems integration. Contributors trace the early history of systems integration using different industrial examples. The second part presents theoretical and analytical aspects of systems integration. Contributions concentrate on the regulatory and cognitive features of systems integration, the relationships between systems integration and regional competitive advantage, and the way in which systems integration supports the competitive advantage of firms. The third part takes industry and firm-level approaches. Contributions focus on different sectors and highlight the specificity of systems integration in various industrial domains, stressing its importance for systems integration in the case of complex capital goods, such as aircraft and telecommunications equipment as well as consumer goods, such as personal computers and automobiles.

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