Final Project

It’s tempting to look at Microsoft and Bill Gates, Oracle and Larry Ellison, or Dell and Michael Dell and think, “All the good opportunities are gone.” But, the great news is, *it’s not true*. Rather, the *great* opportunities are in front of us.

Although I’m sure that many fortunes are yet to be made by companies that develop, market, and sell technology products, I think most of the great opportunities involve innovative applications of the technology that already exists or that others will develop.

The second-wave phenomenon identified by Harry Dent makes sense to me. Although his predictions of a 30,000 Dow-Jones average by 2010 seem ludicrous today, his analysis about the second wave—the application of technology use—seems sensible.

Getty Images (GYI) is an excellent example of success through innovative application of IS and IT. The company has harnessed database technology to create a system that produces images at near zero marginal cost. YouTube was purchased by Google for $1.62 billion after just over a year of operations! That is less time than it took to write this textbook!

Getty Images and YouTube are not the last companies to find innovative applications of technology. Many, many more such opportunities exist, and our students are positioned to take advantage of them. Even students who are uninterested in entrepreneurial opportunities can apply their knowledge to find innovative ways to accomplish the organization’s competitive advantage. Applications of IS, no matter how clever or how innovative, must reinforce the organization’s competitive strategy.

I do not think we can overemphasize the importance of the opportunities for nearly free data storage and data communications. Here are some consequences:

* Numerous cities are sponsoring projects to provide fiber-optic cable to the home.
* Wireless networks are everywhere—city parks, public buildings, coffee shops, etc.
* The entertainment, computer, and data communications industries are reinforcing one another.
* Blogs and Twitter have revolutionized mainstream media and, in the process, are changing the dynamics of politics.
* Podcasting provides a podium for everyone and enables listeners to consume the products on their own time and in their own, very flexible space.
* Cheap storage and data communications, along with standards like XML, will have a major, possibly revolutionary, impact on inter-organizational activities like supply chain management.
* Business use of social networking and UGC will continue to grow, if not to explode.
* What do you think are some consequences of these changes?
* What are some opportunities for innovation within a company?
* Even those of you who aren’t interested in innovative applications of IS and IT can think about innovative ways of NOT using IS and IT. For example, wireless, podcasting, and cell phones make it impossible to get off the grid.
* What opportunities does that fact create for recreation? For travel? For tourism? For employee counseling? Other?

For this Final Project you're asked to come up with a detailed proposal for an original application of Information Systems! Think long and hard; consider your current work organization --or some other organization you know well. What novel information system would benefit this organization?

Think of where technology is headed and what are the needs (acknowledged or perceived by you) as to information systems. How would you improve the organization's operations or bottom line with the information system you propose? How much would it cost? Is it doable with the organization's current resources?

. The specific sections of which the Proposal should consist are as follows:

1. Introduction. (A very brief description of the organization should be included here, so that readers can be properly oriented.)

2. Description of the information systems proposed.

3. Availability of resources. (Does the organization have the resources needed for the project: people, hardware, software, procedures, communications?)

4. Tangible (monetary) benefits to the organization.

5. Intangible benefits to the organization.

6. Summary: why the organization should go ahead with this implementation?