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APPLICATION CASES IN MIS

FIFTH EDITION ||| JAMES MORGAN

Application Cases in MIS

Fifth Edition

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PREFACE

Application Cases in MIS was written to support any MIS textbook that is used for courses with a substantial hands-on component. This casebook is designed to assist students in learning to design and develop hands-on computer applications to solve managerial problems. It is written for students who are prospective managerial users of computer systems, and not for potential information systems professionals. The cases presented in this casebook are business oriented. However, the methods and skills covered here should be useful to anyone working in a managerial level professional capacity in any type of organization.

The primary goal of this casebook is to help students learn to design and develop computer applications, which use common end user software packages to solve real world managerial problems. The cases presented here are centered on combinations of Internet skills, spreadsheet skills, and database management skills.

There are no cases in this book centered on work with word processing or presentation software packages, however the assigned work for nearly all of the cases requires students to "incorporate" selected results of, their application in a memorandum or report or into a "set of slides" for a business presentation. In those instances, students are expected to use a word processing package or use Power Point or a similar presentation package to complete the assignment. Many of the cases include assignments requiring the student to prepare a set of business presentation materials, e.g., Power Point slides. To build presentation skills, instructors may combine these assignments with a requirement to present the results of a case one or more times over the semester.

This casebook is designed for use in classes where incoming students are expected to have some prior experience with the use of spreadsheet and database packages and with the word processing and presentation software needed to complete the case assignments. Thus, the mechanics of using software packages are not covered in this casebook. However, only a minimal level of knowledge of these packages is required to complete the cases presented here. Similarly, it is assumed that students have had some

experience with information retrieval through the Internet or that they can learn these skills through on-line help.

Students without previous experience in the use of these common business application packages, and students who feel that they need to refresh their skills in the use of these packages may need to use supplemental materials such as reference manuals or tutorial workbooks to develop the fundamental skills needed to complete these cases. One such resource is the Simnet MIS tutorial CD, available from McGraw-Hill, which provides interactive tutorials covering a variety of spreadsheet and database skills.

To help instructors and students identify the business and computer application skills needed to complete each case, a Case Skills Matrix is provided immediately following this preface. This Case Skills Matrix describes the business topic skills covered by the case (listed in italics) and then summarizes the software skills needed to complete each case.

Students enter MIS courses with widely varied levels of experience in the other functional areas of business. The cases presented in this casebook have been designed to present real world business situations without requiring the use of advanced functional area skills that some students may not have. Brief explanations are provided when basic terminology or calculations requiring on functional area knowledge are used.

Building end user applications requires more than simply having a technical knowledge of spreadsheet and database packages. The end user developer must be able to identify situations calling for the development of an end user computer application and must be able to design and develop an application that will provide the appropriate information in as effective a manner as possible. These skills in identifying problem situations requiring computer applications and designing solutions are key to successful use of computer technology, and form the main thrust of this casebook.

Three sets of cases are presented: a set of applications using the Internet, a set of spreadsheet applications, and a set of database applications. Some of the database cases require the integrated use of both database and spreadsheet software and several of the

spreadsheet and database cases involve incorporating information gathered from the Internet into spreadsheets or database tables.

A chapter of material describing applicable design and development tools and methods and applying them to a sample case is presented before each set of cases. The chapter materials describing development tools and methods assume the use of a windows environment with integrated application packages and an available Internet browser. The cases present real world problem situations in a narrative form. Application designs are presented for the first four cases in the spreadsheet and database chapters to help give students a better feel for the design process. However, the remaining cases in each set require the student to design and develop an appropriate application based only upon the narrative problem description.

The windows based "suites" of application development software packages have simplified the process of building applications that use multiple tools (e.g. spreadsheet, database, word processing, and presentation software) in an integrated fashion. The ability to use these packages effectively in an integrated fashion is an important skill and is emphasized in the cases of this edition.

The web site for this casebook provides startup files for use on those cases requiring the use of substantial amounts of data. These files are provided in order to reduce the amount of repetitive data entry required to complete these cases. Completed files for the sample cases presented in Chapters 1, 3, and 5 are also available for download. The files for spreadsheet cases are in EXCEL format and those for database case in ACCESS format, but they should be readable by most common commercial spreadsheet and database packages. The requirements for your computer system to be able to support the cases in this book are quite minimal.

These files will have the names indicated in this casebook and can be found at the Internet site:

<http://www.mhhe.com/business/mis/morgan/5ed>.