Bachelor Thesis / Master Thesis

Shadow IT - the Evil From the IT Governance Point of View, but the Lifesaver From the Business Point of View?

Shadow IT refers to IT systems that exist within the walls of business departments but which are not known to or not managed by the corporate IT department. A commonly cited reason by practitioners is that the IT organization is either unable or unwilling to provide the requested IT services at all or in the time required. Thus, especially in large organizations, an uncontrolled growth of shadow IT systems is not a seldom phenomenon. Even though shadow IT is prevalent in organizational reality, relatively little attention has been paid to this phenomenon from a researcher’s point of view. Preliminary results indicate that the occurrence of shadow IT systems is most likely the effect of a range of underlying IT problems.

The thesis’ main objective is to shed light into the phenomena of shadow IT by investigating its characteristics in practice and identifying the drivers of its occurrence as well as to provide recommendations to IT decision makers for its governance. As a starting point, the student is expected to review existing literature and discussions on shadow IT as well as on theories that might serve as a foundation for answering the research question. Based on the findings of the literature analysis, the student is expected to conduct an interview study with relevant practitioners in order to identify and compile different dimensions/types of shadow IT as well as their major drivers. These drivers should be consolidated in a model of shadow IT that provides insights into the underlying reasons of the occurrence of the phenomenon. Finally, the thesis should conclude with potential strategies how affected organizations can better deal with their shadow IT systems.

Please note that, depending on the type of paper (bachelor thesis, master thesis), the scope outlined above has to be adjusted.

Recommended Literature:


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