

BEST PRACTICE

# BiSL<sup>®</sup> Next

A FRAMEWORK FOR  
BUSINESS INFORMATION  
MANAGEMENT

2nd edition

Improving business performance  
through better use of information  
and technology



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# **BiSL<sup>®</sup> Next - A Framework for Business Information Management - 2nd edition**

**Improving business performance through  
better use of information and technology**

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**Lucille van der Hagen**

**Gerard Wijers**

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# Colophon

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# Foreword

*This is AGILE, is everything else SENILE?*

BiSL Next... 'Next what?' I hear you ask.

Well, it is the next generation of guidance for business managers and business information managers; and unlike other good practice frameworks, it does not simply plug in the 'AGILE' word and hope that you don't notice that nothing has changed.

It is the first good practice framework to reference the Marx brothers, Einstein, Monty Python, Oscar Wilde and myriad other figures that you would not expect to see in a book that is written for business service owners and business information managers.

Instead of being another well-meaning but ultimately heavy duty and resource intensive process framework, BiSL next is a consideration of the business and market forces that determine the need and value of business services that are in the modern day, either entirely digital or intrinsically and inextricably supported by digital services.

Where you need process, it is identified as a capability which can be Agile, or (if you must....) heavy duty, perhaps where your enterprise needs the security of, well, security and you need to consider the value of more intensive processes.

Besides the operational information processes that most enterprises need to streamline, the focus of BiSL in this book is the Governance and Strategic oversight that the enterprise needs to ensure that existing IT dependent business services are improved rapidly and effectively and that new services are brought to market more efficiently.

Alongside BiSL Next, everything in the good practice market looks old fashioned; there are no pages and pages of procedures that are either not appropriate to

your enterprise or way too cumbersome. There are no 'new' process models that are 0.00001% different to every other process model you ever saw. And no wheels are reinvented; if you need advice covered by another good practice, for example ITIL, or COBIT or TOGAF or even the UN, then you are told where to find it and how to use it (and IT....).

This is guidance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century; use your head and use the guidance to help your enterprise.

Maarten Hillenaar  
*Former CIO Dutch Government*  
*Principal Consultant SIG*  
*Smart City Lead The Hague*

## Reading tips

The power of this book is the reflective nature. That's why, besides the usual instructive text, you will find some other elements in this book. Quotes and cartoons will appear throughout the book, supporting our message that business information management is crucial for your business, and drawing attention to other important topics. Also anagrams are used, illustrating that joining up things in the wrong way can have entirely different results.

The first two chapters are of special interest to business managers who want to learn more about the importance of business information management and how BiSL can help in achieving business goals.

For a better understanding of the various terms, please take note of the list of Terms and Definitions in Appendix A.

Alongside this book there are additional white papers that can be downloaded for free from the website of ASL BiSL Foundation, [www.aslbislfoundation.org](http://www.aslbislfoundation.org). These give introductions to various topics, like complementary frameworks, Business Change Management, Knowledge Management et cetera. Here's a list of the white papers:

- White paper 'Business Change Management'
- White paper 'Complementary Frameworks'
- White paper 'Basic Principles of Collaborative Business Service Design'
- White paper 'Knowledge Management'
- White paper 'ToR for Structural bodies for managing information services development'
- White paper 'Example risk management framework'
- White paper 'Estimation techniques'
- White paper 'Example contractual clauses'
- White paper 'From BiSL to BiSL Next'





# Preface

## Headaches...

These are some of the questions that you as a business information manager may have in mind:

- ✓ What is our enterprise strategy with regard to IT?
- ✓ Where is our operating model?
- ✓ Who can advise about Security?
- ✓ Do I have sufficient information about how IT services are provided?
- ✓ How much time do I have to think about the transformative impact of major changes?
- ✓ How do users perceive their experience of data-driven services (their user experience, U X)?
- ✓ Has risk assessment of the proposals taken place?
- ✓ Who is in charge of the programme of change?
- ✓ Will the change mean a change in business direction?
- ✓ What support processes will be affected?
- ✓ What is a cloud and where can I buy a couple?
- ✓ Will there be a change to my information needs?
- ✓ What new capabilities are required from the IT information processing services?
- ✓ Can the current IT infrastructure deliver what is required, or must I instigate technical IT changes with the CIO?
- ✓ What the hell is Agile?
- ✓ Can I insulate myself from IT failure?
- ✓ If not, how can I avoid IT failure?
- ✓ And please explain to me what is a TOGAF®, a BiSL® Next, an ITIL®, a COBIT® and why I should care if IT is for IT?

Before exploring BiSL®, it is worthwhile thinking about the ever-present need to 'align' business with IT. Enterprises are tired of hearing about 'alignment' or 'integration' and do not wish to see endless IT process models telling them how this framework or that model will solve all of their problems and at the same time establish peace on earth, goodwill to all men and as a by-product, eradicate poverty. Business wants transformative improvement from IT.

For this reason, BiSL is meant to impact behavior rather than to be another process model in the long row of already existing process models.

The crucial issue is ensuring that a model exists that reflects good practices which is easy to explain, will have benefit if used correctly (i.e. not used as a big stick) and promotes behavior that has a beneficial impact on the way the enterprise operates.

Success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century depends on IT. And will success be a result of outsourcing (and retaining a business function to manage the business/IT interface) or will you be able to do everything 'in house'?

You will continue to need IT, and IT deficiencies can stop your business operating effectively. And in times of change, you must still operate using

services that may have been designed ten or twenty years ago; the need to run your business day-to-day often depends on managing small scale changes that often get in the way of long term thinking. How many business services can you identify that are not either entirely dependent on IT or at the very least, IT-driven?

The key issues for effective business information management are:

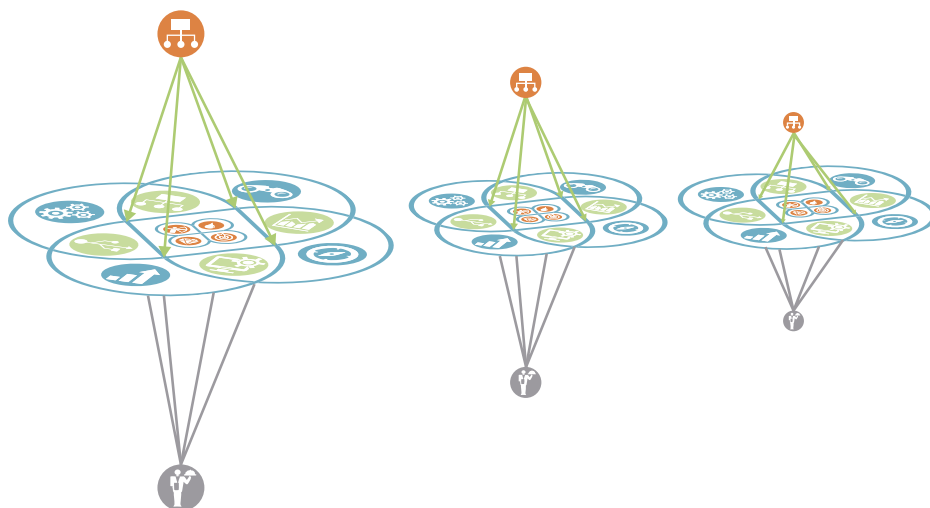
- Portfolio and programme management in line with your enterprise strategy;
- Designing information services that meet business needs;
- Organizing your digital information needs;
- Selecting appropriate technical (technology....) infrastructure;
- If you can't '*do it yourself*' finding people you can trust.

Expertise to help you is available from many sources (details of the ten zillion frameworks and standards) that are available can be found at White paper 'Complementary frameworks'. Your next step is to understand in more depth the changes that you will have to deal with.

Business thinking and IT thinking are often separated by a large gap in both understanding and possibilities regarding use. This is represented in Figure 1. Consider this figure for a moment; business and IT have different perspectives on topics such as Governance, Strategy, Improvement, or Operation. And yet their perspectives are expected to meet in the middle (as if by magic....). Many frameworks exist that focus on specific IT issues, very few on specific business information issues. Consider also that there are many degrees of separation possible; the further apart 'business' is from 'IT' the harder it is to understand the needs of the other and even to communicate effectively. Google, AirBnB or Uber might be best represented by the pyramid shown on the right of Figure 1, whereas enterprises that are long standing (or government bodies) are better represented by the center pyramids. But let's be honest, most enterprises are not like Google, Uber, or AirBnB.

Figure 1 also represents a single customer being fully in line with a single service supplier; multiply the impact of that scenario by numerous information partners, multiple lines of business and multiple IT service suppliers and it is obvious that 'business – IT alignment' is complicated.

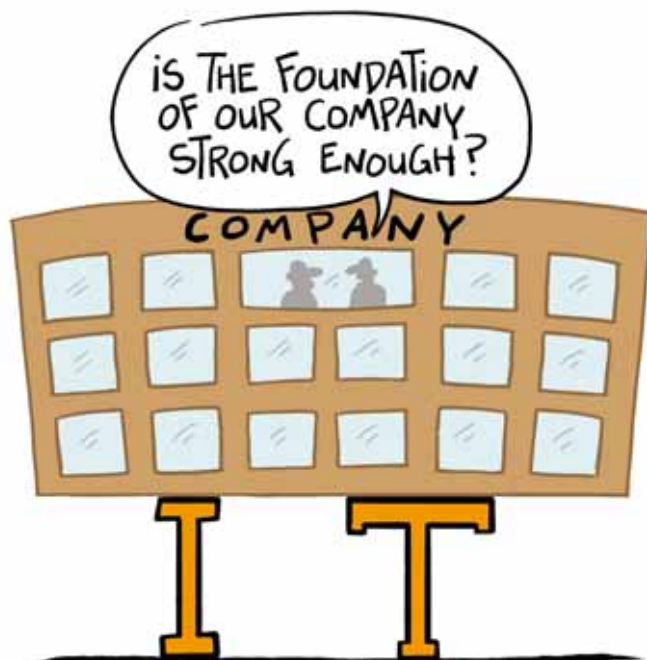
This book addresses many of the issues associated with IT that the business manager may have to deal with in an environment of rapid and strategic business change when past practices may have to be ditched. The book also considers the issue of transformative, strategic change arising from innovation, not just problems. After all, IT is part of the fabric of business unless you are selling fruit from a market stall and even then you may have a website, take credit cards for payment, or buy an electronic cash register...



**Figure 1** Why business and IT need to be in alliance

The purpose is to help you to manage business information and technology securely and efficiently, control IT and to integrate it within your business, precisely when you may feel you have other things on your mind.

Those familiar with BiSL will find all of the good practices they already use, though some are renamed (to simplify diagrams) some relationships changed to improve the logical use of the practices and some new material added. The major difference



is a change in focus; BiSL in the past mainly focused on operational good practices with regard to business information management, with the result that executives were either unaware of the guidance or unaware that they should be taking notice of BiSL. More information about the changes from BiSL to BiSL Next, can be found in the white paper 'From BiSL to BiSL Next'.

Now that IT is the business-driver for most enterprises, executive surveillance of BIM (Business Information Management) is a hot topic and the focus of BiSL has been altered to promote executive understanding. Whilst operational guidance remains vital, executive governance and oversight is crucial to expanding the scope and benefits of managing business information more robustly. This should be in place first before elaborating operational details.

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# Introduction

## ■ CONTENT AND CONTEXT

Focusing on business information management (BIM) provides you with the opportunity to:

- Govern business information management;
- Concentrate on transformative data-driven services;
- Be strategic with regard to the information needs of the enterprise and networked enterprises and to direct data and information services design accordingly;
- Address the development of business services that depend on information by directing the development of digital business services by directing information needs throughout services development using programme and project good practice;
- Ensure the required operational functionality will be delivered through the use of specific frameworks to address information and data management, functionality, software and infrastructure support.

## ■ THE BiSL NEXT FRAMEWORK

The BiSL Next model is an entirely fresh update of the original material; the business information services focus has been shifted from the operational functions to a focus on the Mission and Capabilities of the modern enterprise. The original BiSL comprised a library of documents and this book and the new model now form the basis of the revisions to the framework. The redefined model is mapped to the original model, which we will call BiSL1 in this book. Please refer to the website of ASL BiSL Foundation, [www.aslbisfoundation.org](http://www.aslbisfoundation.org). The redefinition was necessary to simplify understanding and to emphasize strategic issues as well as to expand the coverage in order to encompass issues that have emerged in the past decade.

From this point onwards, when mentioning BiSL, we are referring to the new version of BiSL.

## Men have become the tools of their tools

Henry David Thoreau

BiSL must be largely applicable irrespective of specific industry sector or political institution. Thus the guidance is abstract in some areas because the actual interpretation of its use is much more important than simply copying the guidance and assuming it applies in exactly the same way to every enterprise; the widely spread assumption that process model 'x' from guidance 'y' can be copied and pasted without application of a single iota of thought has become largely discredited.

BiSL1 is currently supported by good practices including examples of forms, ways of working and templates. These good practices are derived from how enterprises have put the BiSL1 framework into operational practice and are available on the ASL BiSL Foundation website, [www.aslbiisfoundation.org](http://www.aslbiisfoundation.org). Where appropriate these good practices are or will be updated.



The framework needs to be useful and applicable in any situation and enterprise. Therefore these BiSL good practices are recommended rather than mandated. It will be up to each enterprise to decide on what is mandatory and what might be desirable or even superfluous and such decisions will depend on many things including enterprise culture and goals.

## Purpose of this book

We exist in a digital economy and most of the information we use is digital. Digital information is the currency with which business is transacted within enterprises and exchanged between enterprises. The Information we have available influences our actions and thus the requirements for this information become increasingly stringent: information must be accurate, timely, complete, etc. The result is that standards for the functionality and quality of the information processing systems are similarly stringent. Information systems comprise both manual, non-automated and automated processes and numerous supporting IT components that together result in a business information service being provided. Numerous 'definitions' exist, for example:

*An **information service** is a service that provides any party with the necessary information for its activities. Information services comprise three components: functionality, data and technology.*

*A **business information service** is a service that provides the business with the necessary information for delivering business services to their customers.*

*A **business service** is a service provided by the enterprise to its customers and other stakeholders, which comprises one or more products and/or services.*

## DATA DRIVEN SERVICE SERVER INACTIVE, DAD

In this book, the **information service** definition above is considered the key definition for the **components** of an information service used by the business; **business information service** is considered to be the most suitable definition for the **IT-driven services** that exist to deliver necessary information and **business service** is considered to be the most suitable to describe the **overall goal** of providing the necessary information and data.

Enterprises must deal with unprecedented levels of change in the way in which they conduct their business. Often these changes are enabled by IT, and IT is nearly always affected by business change. IT is far too easy to change at one level and far too complex at another, and some business managers contend that IT inhibits change. IT is also 'multi-modal', with large mainframes, cloud services and different development methods all frequently used in the same enterprise.

The purpose of this book is to provide a summary of the responsibilities of BIM in the digital age. In doing so it provides a guide to all those involved with BIM, whether it