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Title: Required Skill Sets of Information Technology Workers in Managed Hosting Environments in Higher Education.

Abstract:

Through the rise of online learning, the playing field has been leveled for colleges across the globe. As costs continue to increase, greater emphasis is being placed on higher education institutions to maximize existing resources while adapting to technological advances. Building on Christensen's theory of disruptive innovation, and further considering Lunenberg's work on higher education as an open system that must adapt to its changing environment, the researcher aimed to understand the realities of a shifting information technology (IT) landscape on IT professionals. A mixed method sequential exploratory approach was used to investigate if additional skills were required of IT professionals in managed hosting environments. The study further investigated if a change in organizational staffing would be required or a change in career trajectory would be possible. The quantitative phase, which included responses from 28 participants across 25 institutions, suggested that participants did not find that managed hosting environments required additional skills, different staffing models, or additional career trajectories. The qualitative phase uncovered additional insights. Via responsive interviewing of five interviewees, the researcher found HEIs that utilize managed hosting for IT applications places an emphasis on soft skills and increased user communication. Further, there was a consensus that managed hosting for IT applications changes the responsibilities of IT staff. However, the overall impact of a managed hosting strategy on a HEIs workforce will depend heavily on leadership and the organizational culture of the institution.

Keywords:

Managed hosting; Organizational culture; Required skill set; Information Technology; Leadership