

Sustainable Management of IT Enterprises



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1 Understanding Business Sustainability in the Digital Era

The need to boost up economic development in a sustainable way is a challenge for the 21st century's companies. We are in a connected reality, in which environmental, social, and economic concerns are in the limelight for all activity sectors—and even more for those pushing further the social and business transformation at all levels, such as the IT sector. It could seem common sense to bring together digital opportunities and sustainable practices at the forefront of any strategic business thinking, but there are concerns that an opposite reality could emerge. For instance, unguided AI development could accelerate the environment's degradation, even if the technology itself already presents the transformative capacity to positively address the planet's environmental challenges (PwC 2018). Similarly, if not properly designed and executed, the perceived positive digital contributions to the development of the circular economy (Berg and Wilts 2018) could lead to negative effects on society.

Although digital technologies and sustainability have the potential to reinforce each other, they do not easily match, mainly because they are used to answer to different functions: driving efficiency and ensuring social, economic, and environmental resilience.

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