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ACHIEVING BUSINESS @ THE SPEED OF THOUGHT

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

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Abstract

Almost two decades ago, the business community touted Bill Gates' book *Business @ the Speed of Thought* as visionary. Gates laid out his blueprint for how the immediate propagation of relevant information from network to network and business to business via a digital nervous system would change the way every business operated. The value of immediately being able to access timely and pertinent information was highly desired by any business seeking a competitive advantage.

Fifteen years later and Gates' vision has yet to be realized. Organizations have difficulty integrating with one another at both a technical and business level, and rapidly changing environments are problematic when trying to maintain resilient business process integration.

This raises some key questions. Why is enterprise integration so difficult? What are the barriers to enterprise integration? Can identified barriers be overcome? Ultimately, we need to know if the digital nervous system analogy is realistic or if there is a maximum achievable level of integration and cohesion.

This report investigates approaches to integration, compares them against current attitudes and practices within enterprise organizations, and takes valuable steps towards confronting realistic integration expectations, and outlining future areas of research.

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Dr Parsons' common-sense approach to technology is an acknowledgement that context changes often and that a sound solution in one context may not be so in another. I found his perspective on the evolution of information science refreshing and thought provoking, and will always consider his viewpoint when designing solutions in the future.

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