Chapter 2 Discussion Questions

2. Why do organizations exist? Do some organizations exist today that no longer serve a real purpose? Why or why not?

Organizations are created in part to take advantage of division of labor. Skilled specialist can perform a task more efficiently and with a higher quality than a generalist. With the division of labor comes the need to coordinate and control activities: an organization is born. Lacking organizations, a market system exists. It is up to the individual to do all of the tasks necessary to run a business. Repairmen and some service industry companies that are sole proprietors fall under this category.

3. What do the authors mean by "islands of automation?" What are the factors that lead an organization to create these islands? Give some examples.

As established organizations invested in information technology, systems were brought in to handle specific functions. The accounting department had a system with accounting software. HR had a system with HR software. Production may have had a system to track inventory or generate work orders. The production system software may have been built on a spreadsheet. These separate systems were not linked together, and data in that business environment that needed to be shared had to be entered into each system separately. The systems were introduced on an "as needed" priority. In some cases, software was not available for the business function. The choice was to create the needed software in-house, or wait until it became available commercially.

4. Discuss the trade-off between connectivity and responsiveness in information technology. Do you believe there are any limits to this relationship? What role does the Internet play in terms of connectivity and responsiveness?

This problem first arose at the introduction of the PC. The big room downstairs no longer controlled workers, they now had computing power on their desktops. Instant response became the marketing push for PC vendors. Connecting the systems back together has advantages. Sharing of data and information, lower costs of peripheral devices, elimination of data re-entry just to name a few. Internet connections are becoming faster, and more applications that are web based are becoming available. Soon, the problems with Internet responsiveness will disappear.

5. **Explain the role of standards in the development of information technology. What are some positive and negative aspects to the adoption of standards? How do these differ for IT developers and IT consumers?**

The importance of standards can be traced back to the notion of interchangeable parts. If a part is made to specifications, it can be replaced without having to duplicate the broken part. Standards allow for other vendors to create replacement parts. When changing spark plugs in a car, we have the option to choose from many manufacturers of plugs due to standards. The same holds true for development in IT. With a standard platform, products can be made and introduced without changing the whole environment. This can stifle progress if the standards limit the developer.