New Master's Thesis Topic Available:
Toward a Framework for Managing
IT Vendors and Suppliers

The Chair of Information Systems and Strategic IT Management is looking for master's students planning to write their final thesis in the field of IT management in the near future. We offer a master's thesis topic that is of growing interest to most IT organizations:

IT vendor management (ITVM) plays an increasingly relevant role in IT organizations; many companies already spend more than half their IT budgets on services from external providers. Trends like outsourcing, XaaS, Cloud Computing or the standardization of technology accelerate and intensify this development. Despite the importance of ITVM, many IT organizations struggle to implement an effective yet efficient ITVM that would be capable of selecting the right vendors, maintaining beneficial long-term relationships with vendors and steering the provision of services and products. Not surprisingly, satisfaction with vendor performance is often low, although the root causes of the problems perceived lie with both the vendors and the IT organization. Currently, academic literature offers limited advice on how to successfully implement ITVM. The master's thesis should help close this gap.

To reach this goal, master's students are invited to take part in a research project involving researchers from the University of Duisburg-Essen and the University of Bayreuth. The students should contribute to the (further) development of a viable and useful vendor management framework that helps organizations to design the relevant processes, organizational structures and governance regimes. The work involves the refinement of the framework, its proper depiction, documentation and evaluation. The latter may include interviews with subject-matter experts from practice or the study of selected cases (based on both primary and secondary data). Students interested in this kind of research should have successfully attended the IS Research course.

In case this topic is of potential interest to you, please prepare a letter of motivation and transcript of records, and send it to Prof. Dr. Frederik Ahlemann (frederik.ahlemann@uni-due.de).

Recommended Literature:

- Urbach, N., Ahlemann, F. and El Arbi, F. (2014) Towards a Design Theory for Customer Satisfaction-Oriented IT Vendor Management, Proceedings of the 20th Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS 2014), August 7-10, Savannah, Georgia.

- Urbach, N. and Würz, T. (2012) How to Steer the IT Outsourcing Provider - Development and Validation of a Reference Framework of IT Outsourcing Steering Processes, Business & Information Systems Engineering (BISE), 4, 5, 247-259