

Editorial

Igor Aleksander, *Editor in Chief*

This issue

The theme is that of Formal Methods and I must express my sincere thanks to Les Johnson and Bernie Cohen, both for having organized the best-attended meeting of the AIT to date and for having acted as guest editors to the proceedings in this issue.

The increasing importance of this field lies in the fact that it promises the reward of being able to check the correctness of a process, procedure or design through an application of mathematics rather than trial and error. Such processes are not restricted to the design of software and hardware, but may be managerial or to do with the organization of manufacturing processes.

It is a historical fact that there is considerable scepticism in industrial settings towards the deployment of formal methods. One still recalls the days when the design of computers was totally divorced from Boolean Algebra. Boolean Algebra certainly cannot be seen to have been responsible for any major performance development in IT, but it is now deeply ingrained in the design process as a language for expressing ideas that would otherwise be seen as being complex and untractable. This is the likely fate for the formal methods that are the subject of debate in this issue.

The rest of this issue contains (blushingly) a transcript of my own inaugural lecture (following in the tradition of publishing such started with Professor Mamdani last year) and a challenging short paper by Eric Landles. Talking of challenges, Catherine Griffiths and Peter Clark, researchers in the Kobler Unit have listed an intriguing set of questions to discover whether we really know how to value information.

The AIT

At its AGM in March, the AIT completed its second year of existence. The feeling of Frank Land and myself is that we have learnt some important lessons: members are busy people not easily persuaded to write papers or come to meetings; the interest in IT is even broader than we first thought and IT means more things to more people than was first estimated. Nevertheless, the formula of the AIT seems to work — one person's specialism can be of interest to another.

However, we also feel that it is important for the AIT not to remain parochially focused on the UK. It is for this reason that Kogan Page are marketing the Journal in Japan and the USA and we look forward to this expansion. Above all, we welcome contributions from all our members and urge you to send in your ideas, papers, comments and suggestions.