

Editorial

This edition marks the start of the Journal's third year of publication. We trust that we are not adopting editorial rose-coloured spectacles in suggesting that the Journal has made considerable progress in its short publishing lifetime! Nor are we unaware that there is room for further improvement and, indeed, are looking for ways to achieve this. A letters column would be nice and has already been discussed as an additional item, but it lacks one thing at present – letters from you, the reader! Correspondence is welcomed on any topic but this edition certainly contains several papers that should stir you to attack the word-processor keyboard (or put pen to paper if you are not fully committed to IT).

This edition reports on legal issues in IT, which subject was tackled in the September meeting of the AIT. So far only one of the speakers at that meeting has contributed to the Journal but we look forward to further reports in future issues.

Ronald Stamper warns us of the dangers in applying artificial intelligence to legal applications. The legal issues arising from IT are very important and two other papers are included on this topic. Roger Clarke discusses legal liabilities which may arise from the use of 'knowledge-based technology', a term he prefers to 'expert systems'.

Paul Marett looks at the legal issues of trans-border data flow and, while he poses questions rather than providing answers, his paper helps to clarify some of the points at issue.

Moving on from the legal issues theme, there is a selection of papers on a wide range of topics. Paul Strassmann analyses the productivity of technical documentation. Tim Parker and Margarethe Idundun present the results of a survey of the goals of the information system departments of the UK's 100 largest companies. It is interesting to view their results in the light of the suggestions of Ewan Sutherland and Yves Morieux on the relationships between business strategy, organizational culture and the use of information technology.

Two interesting 'Personal Views' are included. Ian Priban gives an expanded version of his presentation at a meeting of the AIT held in October 1987, which is intended to provoke thought and possibly, nay hopefully, dialogue. Gordon Scarrott muses on the parallel between Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and life.

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