Editorial

Readers will have noticed a change in the front cover of the Journal in the March and June issues. The new motif signals the broader objectives and coverage of the Journal as represented in the policy statement in Volume 5 Number 1. The Journal will continue to carry technical, and technology-based papers, but it also has, as its purpose, a focus on information systems management, broadly conceived. The premise here is that management, organization, and information issues and their inter-relationships are as critical as, and in fact intimately related to, technological issues and developments. While it is useful, for analytical purposes, to focus attention on one or several aspects of information systems management, we believe that it is important for it to remain clear how evidence, discussion and concepts in papers relate to the broader picture and to the practical area of information systems in use. It is from this perspective that we intend to join together research findings, academic debate, specific expertise, technological developments, evaluation of applications, case studies and recommendations for IS practice.

We have been asked to bring our readers' attention to a major conference held by the European Group of Public Administration. The conference is entitled 'Informatization in Public Administration' and will take place in The Hague, The Netherlands, 29-31 August 1991. The theme will be elaborated in four workshops headed: informatization politics in central governments; large-scale information systems; information technology and the changing informational infrastructure; and informatization and administrative modernization. These four topics are also the subject of an international research project, and the results of this comparative study will be discussed at the conference. Further details can be obtained from: Professor P. Frissen, Dept. of Public Administration, Faculty of law, Tilburg University PO Box 90153, 5000 LE Tilburg, The Netherlands.

The Association for Information Technology

We are very grateful for the readers who responded to the questionnaire in the December issue of the Journal. As a result of your responses and those of the executive, we have formulated our policy for the immediate future.

Membership

The current two-tier system, a legacy from the merger with the Information Systems Association, will be simplified to its original form. Membership will now be obtained only by subscribing to the Journal. This will enable circulation of all materials to be undertaken by the publishers, Chapman and hall, via the Journal. All enquiries about membership should, therefore, be addressed to the publisher (see inside front cover for details).

Activities

The Association, in accordance with the wishes of its members, will concentrate on those activities which it currently undertakes successfully and will continue to improve its performance; namely the Journal and the Information Systems Teachers Conference. The latter is currently held approximately once a year and concentrates on a contemporary theme. Additional conferences and meetings will be held as appropriate. Occasionally, we are invited to be associated with events whose aims are similar to our own. This we are glad to do and members will receive full details of such events. As the Association grows in size, so it is probable that other similar activities will be undertaken.

The AGM on June 5 1991, at City University Business School, London, includes a presentation by Dr Coulson-Thomas entitled 'Creating a Networked Organization'. Proceedings of the AIT Conference 'Information Systems Teaching – Improving the Practice' held 3-5 April 1991 at Sunningdale, UK are now available from the editorial office of the Journal, price £20 per copy.

This issue

The issue this quarter has a range of contributions covering technical and managerial issues in respect of information systems in both private and public sectors. In the first paper, Brian Henderson-Sellers seeks to show how the object-oriented approach can greatly enhance the quality of finished software products. Parallels are drawn with applications of Total Quality Management philosophies and important issues

surrounding software quality are highlighted. A second paper presents a survey of requirements verification techniques. Here Sachidanandam Sakthivel emphasizes the value of having correct information requirements before systems design commences, and the repercussions of not achieving this. Many techniques are assessed and discovered to be weak. It is also shown that the various requirements analysis approaches using these techniques do not provide a comprehensive verification. Sachidanandam then discusses ways forward, pointing out that few research papers seem to focus on this very valuable area, and that a rewriting of many research agendas may now be in order.

Mahmoud Yasin and Ronald Green provide a useful overview paper which discusses developments toward global systems and the implications for business and education. They suggest improvements in the design of Information Systems curricula, and in the relationships between business and educational establishments.

In the Management Report section we have a paper based upon very recent survey work on information systems in the public sector. Nigel Bacon reports the results of investigating Information Systems strategies in 23 UK government institutions in 1990. The survey shows the progress made in developing IS strategies, and a 'strategic impulse' in these organizations and offers some very valuable lessons learnt so far. Also included in the Management Report section is an interesting case study of implementing information systems. Julie Baddeley describes the process of bringing information systems into Penguin Books stresses the importance of putting users at the forefront of implementation activities, and makes useful

recommendations based on the experience recorded here.

A further survey consists of a review of how software tools are used in the development of medical and health service applications. Respondents spanned 36 Health Authorities in the UK and 11 software houses. The general finding by Don Millington, Ian Tulloch and Edwin Gray was a low level of use of software tools, similar to that of surveys in the UK, but also elsewhere, for example in the USA. The survey indicates that a lack of experience and lack of information are seen as more important factors inhibiting use than cost. The survey report consists of many more such interesting findings and helps to point some directions in which value added can be achieved in the introduction of healthcare information systems.

The remainder of the June issue consists of reviews. The first is of a very recent computer-aided software engineering conference. There follows a collection of book reviews, including one of Fransman's impressive text on Information Technology in the Japanese system. Readers are reminded that if they wish to review a recent publication for this journal they should contact the Reviews Editor at the Editorial Office. Papers are always gratefully received by the Editors, and we try to complete the refereeing process within 3–4 weeks of receipt. Contributors are asked to send papers to either Editor in the first instance, and to follow the guidelines for papers included at the back of this issue.

Leslie Willcocks
Anne Leeming