Editorial

There are two special issues of the *Journal of Information Technology* being planned for the near future. The first will consist of selected papers developed from those presented at the First European Conference in Information Systems, at Henley Management College, UK in March 1993. This was sponsored by a number of commercial institutions and supported by both the Operational Research Society and the Association for Information Technology. The event was a successful one and the second and third conferences are now being planned. The 1994 conference will probably be held in the Netherlands. The Journal and Association will continue to support this important new development. One way is to devote much of the December 1993 issue to papers developed from the conference.

A further special edition will be a theme issue on *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*. The theme is to be interpreted broadly, and we hope to attract a range of papers from different disciplines, from across disciplines, and from different countries. We already have a number of papers being prepared for this issue, but now put forward a formal invitation to anyone who wishes to make a contribution. The deadlines are:

- Submission of paper for refereeing –
by 10 September 1993
- Papers refereed, authors notified –
by 8 October 1993
- Revised paper/final version to editor –
by 26 November 1993

The likely publication date will be March 1994. This is a tight deadline, and to avoid delays or disappointment it is important that all authors follow closely the Notes for Contributors supplied at the back of every issue of the Journal. Enquiries and submissions should be sent to Leslie Willcocks at the Oxford editorial address listed in the inside cover of the Journal.

A mention should also be made of the continued support the AIT and JIT offer to the annual PhD Colloquium on IS research, now in its third year. Inside this issue Bob Galliers of Warwick University Business School describes the genesis, content and progress of this Colloquium from its 1991 beginnings. It is now becoming established as a firm fixture in the IS community and is devoted to progressing research, and improving research practice on IS in the UK academic arena. This, together with the European Conference offers ways in which a sense of community and real interchange can develop

across disciplinary and institutional divides. Both therefore are very actively supported by the Association and the Journal.

This issue

There are five main papers in this issue of the Journal and one management report. The five papers cover a wide spread of topics. The first, by Geoffrey Howard and Arun Rai reports the results of a large survey into CASE usage and diffusion in the USA. It finds widespread purchase but little everyday use of CASE amongst the respondent organization. The authors classify types of use and also offer a description and advice on successful CASE implementation drawn from their sample. The second paper, by Theodora Ngosi and John Jenkins, looks at the information requirements needed to establish international software standards. Their research shows this to be a very problematical area, not least because of the international groups and bureaucracies involved. Given the long period it takes under current arrangements to develop international standards, the authors usefully research how IS can be developed and applied to reduce this development time significantly.

The third paper switches attention to the issues surrounding the development and use of IS in developing countries. This paper is by Geoff Walsham. He offers an analysis of three case studies of large-scale decentralized computer-based IS. He is particularly interested in investigating what makes systems successful or otherwise, and the degree to which effective decentralized systems design and implementation relate to different forms of user participation. The author makes suggestions for the approaches and type of IS that will be more usefully applied in developing countries. He also discusses the degree to which decentralized systems and participative approaches can be adopted in cultures and management situations which have tended to favour centralization and autocracy of an established elite. A further issue, exemplified from a UK case, is whether decentralized systems necessarily decentralize power to local levels.

The fourth paper focuses on the key issues confronting IS researchers. Bob Galliers firstly discusses the terms 'information' and 'systems', and then discusses the key issues emerging internationally in the 1980s and early 1990s. He finds IS researchers often have a different perspective on what is worth researching compared with

executives, and partly explains this as being due to the research methods employed – more laboratory experimentation and survey techniques at the expense of case and field studies. Galliers then argues for a reorientation of research effort and methods ‘to take into account the organizational and managerial issues that have confounded us for far too long’. The final paper, by Oscar Gutierrez, develops a contingency perspective on effective prototyping. He argues that current prototyping practice takes a largely product driven perspective. The author puts forward the importance of several key process concepts that also contribute to effective use of prototyping. These include the organizational commitment to and practice of self-evaluation, the need for flexible project management practices and the recognition that the nature of problems can help to determine the type of effective experimental strategies as well as their timing.

The remainder of the Journal is devoted to a management report by Robert Shaw, an account of the first and second PhD Colloquia on IS held in the UK (to parallel the PhD Colloquium held annually as part of the US-based International Conference in IS) and a report by Roger Harris. In ‘Making marketing databases work’ Shaw argues that marketing has been left behind in the rush to computerize in the 1980s, that care must be exercised in designing and implementing potentially powerful databases for marketing purposes, and that such care has not been too evident in many cases so far. He provides guidelines on ways forward. Bob Galliers contributes a second paper; this time his account of two PhD seminars so far held in the UK in the 1991–92 period, with a considerable degree of success. The objective is to provide a forum for PhD students to develop their work, make contacts with other PhD students in the IS field, and also have access during the seminars to a group of experienced UK-based academic staff to discuss issues. The third colloquium is to be held this year at Warwick Business School in September 1993, and the organizers invite applications from interested PhD students. The contact address appears in the Conference Report in this issue of the Journal. The second conference report is a report by Roger Harris on the annual conference on the association of computing machinery special interest group in computer personnel research.

Forthcoming papers include

Planning for IS resources? P. Finnegan.
Moving from an executive IS to everyone’s IS:
lessons from a case study. F. Wheeler.

The effectiveness of decision support systems:
the implications of task complexity and DSS
sophistication. R. Webby and M. O’Connor.
Stages of growth in end-user computing: applications
in the health sector of developing countries in
Asia-Pacific. R. Jayasuriya.

Leslie Willcocks
Executive Editor

The Association for Information Technology

On 5 May an extraordinary general meeting of the Association met to vote on proposals put to it by the executive committee. These concerned the future management of the Journal and the Association. It was proposed that this should be by means a group of not less than three trustees. Two names have so far been put forward to act as trustee; Professor Frank Land, Visiting Professor at LSE and Catherine Griffiths, Research Fellow at the Kobler Unit, Imperial College. They will be charged with seeking a third trustee. The proposal is that the trustees will manage the Journal and will have the power to decide whether its ownership should change. They will be charged with appointing an editorial board and executive editor. Leslie Willcocks has indicated willingness to remain in this post. The proposals were accepted unanimously. The trustees will support the ISTP conferences and manage any income of the Association in a manner consistent with the current objectives of the Association.

To pursue the proposals the treasurer will ensure that a proper Trust deed is drawn up to protect the Journal and name of the Association. He will secure the agreement of the Charity Commissioners to this change in the Association’s status. The executive will meet again to effect the changeover when these steps have been completed.

For further information or to comment on these proposals please contact Anne Leeming at the address inside the cover, email: sa364@uk.ac.city or Catherine Griffiths at the Kobler Unit, Imperial College.

Anne Leeming
Chairman Association of Information Technology