

relation to information systems and technology in the framework. Part II discusses the organizational information in business with the application perspective.

Clearly written, the book includes a set of carefully selected examples of GIS in business, which also serve to illustrate the multidisciplinary nature of this topic. It makes an ideal introductory book on this wide-ranging and important aspect of information systems and should appeal to a wide audience. Although this should necessarily include those working or carrying out

research within the GIS community itself, it is also relevant and accessible to those in the field of business and management as well.

Chaomei Chen

*Department of Information Systems and Computing  
Brunel University  
Uxbridge, Middlesex*

### **Information Technology Standards and Standardization: A Global Perspective**

BY K JAKOBS

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The issue of standardisation is unmistakably of great importance to the field of information systems (IS), as only through standardisation can we improve communication between the various building blocks of IS. A book in this valuable area is therefore more than welcome. In the book itself, the following objectives are given. 'In the light of emerging global information infrastructure, information technology standards are becoming increasingly important. At the same time, however, the standards setting process has been criticised as being slow, inefficient and out of touch with market needs. What can be done to resolve this situation?' To provide a basis for an answer to this question, this book paints as full a picture as possible of the varied and diverse aspects surrounding standards and standardisation. This book will serve as a foundation for research, discussion and practice as it addresses trends, problems and solutions for and by numerous disciplines, such as economics, social sciences, management studies, politics, computer science and, particularly, 'users'.

Meeting the above objectives would indeed be a 'best case' scenario. As far as I know there is no such comprehensive book available in the IS area. The 'worst case' scenario would, in my opinion, be a book full of anecdotes and frustrations of people working on the fringes of the industry such as international standardisation bodies or, indeed, 'techies' who do not want to recognise the industrial consequences of particular standards. My personal viewpoint is that the book sits somewhere in the middle of both scenarios. For someone looking for clear answers on standardisation, an overview of standards, standardisation processes and bodies or history of standardisation, the answers will not be

found in this book. This book does, however, address various issues in the area of standardisation. The book contains fifteen chapters, each of which has been written by an autonomous author and which unfortunately do not refer to each other in any way. Many of these chapters, however, contain excellent analyses of valuable research. Two such examples of this are chapters four and seven.

Chapter four is entitled 'Institutional dilemma in ICT standardization: coordinating the diffusion of technology?', written by TM Egyedi. In this chapter a conceptual framework of standardisation is presented and format and de facto standardisation are compared. The standardisation process is explained as an example of market mechanism and not as a setting of technological innovation. Chapter seven is entitled 'Standards, strategy and evaluation', written by R Moreton. This chapter stresses the relation between standardisation in an organization and business benefits. A set of ratios is proposed to monitor the relationship between IS expenditure and overall organizational performance. Additionally, a broader benefits management approach is advocated.

In my opinion the book is particularly suitable for both lecturers who want to discuss the issue of standardisation in advanced courses, and for researchers wishing to publish in this area. The book will also provide useful background reading and thus be of interest to those who are actively involved in a standardisation process. The book offers little information for practitioners tackling standardisation problems in organizations however, which suggests that a book focusing on this area would be much welcomed.

Egon Berghout

*Associate Professor of Information Management  
Information Systems and Software Engineering Department  
Delft University of Technology  
Delft, The Netherlands*