EDITORIAL

Views, change and changing views

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In the third issue of the 2005 volume of the *European Journal of Information Systems*, I introduced a new Editor's View series to the journal, starting with mine (Paul, 2005). In this issue, I am pleased to present the second and third Editor's View papers by the Editors of the *Information Systems Journal* (David Avison, Guy Fitzgerald and Philip Powell) and by the Editor of *Systèmes d'Information et Management* (Franz Rowe). They have chosen to give their views on 'Journal rankings and ratings' and 'On dissemination, national language and interacting with practitioners', respectively, and both papers make forceful pints from the advantage of rare experience and expertise. Two or three more Editor's View papers are expected to be ready for publication this year, giving readers the combined views of the editors of five or six respected *Information Systems Journal* – and more to come in 2007.

This issue also contains a Special Interest Section on *Mobile User Behaviour*, guest edited by Hans van der Heijden and Iris Junglas. The seven papers in this section are sufficiently well introduced in the guest editorial and therefore need no further words from me, except to observe that they all deal with views or behaviour of people in a changing world caused by the availability of technological innovation. I have to add my normal observation at this point, that it is not the rate of change that causes problems, but the increased choice on offer. People like choice, but do not know how to exercise it. Increased choice leads to increasing confusion as to how to exercise this choice, and this gives change a bad name. This outcome is reflected in the '*Mobile User Behaviour*' papers as well as in the three other papers in this issue, which I shall now introduce.

Wiredu and Sorensen's paper *Control and the politics of technology use in mobile work-integrated learning* takes a British National Health Service project to exemplify the contradictions that can arise in the use of mobile technology between the goals of central authority and the personal usage of the technology by trainees. This was a pilot study that was declared unsuccessful even though conceptually it appears attractive. Apart from conceptualising and ensuring technical feasibility, the need for all parts of the system to have the same objectives emerged. This may seem obvious stated as baldy as I have, but it is quite common to assume that a system will bring all users round to the same goals because everyone is using the same system. However, mobile technology enables local decisions.

Walsham's *Doing interpretive research* is another paper in Walsham's distinguished line of papers promoting interpretive research; this one addressed to less-experienced I.S. researchers on how to go about this approach. New ideas on how to justify research outcomes from interpretive research and on ethical issues and tensions are also included. Interpretive research is the gaining of views on a subject in a reconstructable way with rigour and enforced thinking.

The last paper in this issue is Kock, Lynn, Dow and Akgun's *Team adaptation to electronic communication media: evidence of compensatory adaptation in new product development teams*, discusses the balance between loss of communication in non-face-to-face situations compared to the ability of people to adapt in an electronic team activity to the point where

performance turns out to be better than face-to-face communication. Clearly such adaptation requires the team members to look at their working environment and take a view that can then lead to determining such adaptation.

Changing views

All the papers in this issue then deal with change and the views of people involved in the systems. But they all also attempt to change views. The Editor' View papers promote a fresh look at league tables and national language publication hoping to influence the future behaviour of people and communities. The Mobile User Behaviour papers promote new ways of looking at change wrought by mobile device usage, essentially observing that such change has led to socially constructed outcomes and we could take more advantage of this, if we observed that this will continue.

Wiredu and Sorenson advocate the consideration of common goals when using mobile systems that are intended to operate in tandem with a central authority. Walsham promoted interpretive research, a different way or view of doing research that influences the environment being researched into. Kock *et al*. wish the I.S. community to consider new behaviour that might arise when considering electronic team working that had not previously needed consideration.

An issue of changing values. So I shall end this editorial with my contribution to changing values. I recently was invited to give a plenary talk to the annual U.K. Academy of I.S (UKAIS). I took as my theme the need for the I.S. specialists to come together as a community. I.S. is important in our society, both in terms of its potential contribution and the large sums of money lost when system fails. So what do I.S. professionals contribute? It is difficulty to say, and therein lies our problem *vis-à-vis* society. If we are not tangibly contributing, why should anyone seek our views?

There can be many reasons/excuses for our below-par contribution to society. The one I believe to be dominant is that although we have professional groupings (UKAIS, AIS, etc) and professional outlets for dissemination, we are a collection of individuals and many small groups largely competing with each other. This competition in a Darwinian sense has not moved us on in the last 40 years. I suggest that if we combine as a community to address the outside world with a common message, we shall do much better than spending our time looking competitively inwards.

Given my views, I am championing the community idea in the U.K. but would be quite happy to embrace and extend it globally. But here is the changing views paradox. To achieve a community approach, we would all have to pursue a common approach externally. You cannot pretend to be a powerful useful community if there are two or three or many more claims coming from small sub-groups! We would have to be a community. That requires some changing values. Let me know what you think.

References

PAUL RJ (2005) Editor's view: an opportunity for editor of IS journals to relate their experiences and offer advice. The Editorial View of Ray J Paul. First in a series, *European Journal of Information Systems* **14,** 207–212.