

# Editorial

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## First Joint European Conference on Information Systems

A number of activities are combining to create a greater sense of association on a European scale for the information systems community. In preparation for the next International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS '91) in New York, preliminary PhD student consortia are being held in Britain and the Netherlands. These should help to ensure that European students are well represented and more systematically made aware of the importance of this international meeting. At the ICIS meeting itself there will be a special, double session on information systems research in Europe which will provide an overview of research activities, explain the organizational context of European information systems work, and provide some examples of research areas where European contributions, and a European approach, dominate.

In addition to these activities during 1991, planning is well underway for the First Joint European Conference on Information Systems to be held in London from 22 July to 24 July 1992. The meeting is intended to complement **EJIS** and shares the aim of promoting European approaches to the understanding and use of information systems. The meeting will be jointly sponsored by the Operational Research Society, through **EJIS**, and by the Association of Computing Machinery special interest group on business data processing, a combination which will provide an excellent mix of practitioners and theoreticians. The special interest group on business data processing (**SIGBDP**) is one of the largest groups within the Association of Computing Machinery (**ACM**) and the meeting is expected to attract a sizeable number of North Americans, not least because of the variety of activities, including the Olympic Games, which are to be held in Europe in the Summer of 1992. The result, we hope, will be to encourage extensive and useful debate about the similarities and differences among European practitioners, and to set it into the context of the larger scale activities in North America.

The theme of the conference is to explore new ways of generating information for decision making in business. This will involve discussing the tools and methods used in designing and implementing information systems as well as reviewing applications and cases which identify successes and failures in information

systems development. Panel discussions will explore similarities between the academic and practitioner's ways of building information systems and will provide an overview of differences in perspective between European and North American information systems analysts. The conference will consider the state-of-the-art in systems development and management of information technology as well as human resource issues in information systems.

In order to provide an eclectic mix of papers and panels, nine general streams will be encouraged:

- management of information systems
- information systems methodologies and methods
- 1992: national and supra-national information systems policies
- government policy and information technology
- organizational issues and the impact of information systems
- expert systems: procedures and applications
- decision support systems and group decision support systems
- knowledge acquisition tools and methodologies
- surveys of the current state-of-the-art in information systems

We encourage the whole of the European information systems community to support this effort to bring together researchers and practitioners. **EJIS** will be the main outlet for publishing the best of the papers from the meeting.

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This issue of **EJIS** contains two articles, by Gregory Mentzas and Veronica Symons, which explicitly 'review' the state-of-the-art in key areas of current interest. We welcome such review articles and feel that they provide a valuable service to both academics and practitioners who wish to learn quickly about recent work and to have an expert's critical views. Matthew Jones' piece is similarly sweeping in its consideration of new perspectives, influenced from a number of disciplines, on social and economic interpretations of information systems.

David Avison's presentation of the influential French systems development methodology, MERISE, not only makes it better known to English speaking practitioners, but also provides a comparison with the similarly influential British approach, SSADM. Carlton Henry's research in the UK Monopolies and Mergers Commission has led to the first analysis of a specialist expert system for that complex governmental function which may play an increasingly important, Europe-wide role in the near future.

These articles continue the style that **EJIS** has established for internationalism and variety. We hope that

even greater variety can be achieved. We would encourage researchers and practitioners to send in short 'notes' of preliminary results, or progress reports on major long term research activities. As always, we strive to provide a short turnaround time so that accepted pieces can be published quickly and while at the peak of interest.

Finally, research by Heikkeila *et al* shows that the performance of software packages is less a criterion of success than many other factors, especially adaptability. Their statistical analysis is a good model for studying information systems implementation.