Editorial

Hans van der Heijden

Co-editor EJIS

*School of Management, University of Surrey,
Guildford GU27XH, U.K.*
E-mail: h.vanderheijden@surrey.ac.uk

It is my pleasure to write the editorial for the last issue of this year of the *European Journal of Information Systems* (*EJIS*). This issue contains no less than nine papers. It is my privilege to introduce them below.

We are starting off this issue with a paper from Thompson Teo and Bing Men on knowledge portals in Chinese consulting firms. Consultants use knowledge portals to codify the knowledge they have accumulated in prior consultancy engagements, and this codified knowledge can then be accessed by other consultants who are new to the job or to the industry. The authors are interested in the usage of these knowledge portals, and the factors that contribute to its use. They demonstrate how two important characteristics of knowledge portals interact: the quality of the codified knowledge on the one hand, and the extent to which the consultants believe the requested knowledge *can* be codified on the other. The latter characteristic is referred to as 'knowledge tacitness' and the authors demonstrate its important role in the success of a knowledge portal implementation.

The next paper, written by Kari Smolander and colleagues, is a discussion on the concept of *software architecture*. This important concept is often spoken about in information system development, but nonetheless there is very little consensus on what it actually means. The authors set out to resolve some of its ambiguity, and conducted interviews in three firms to seek clarification on the concept. Their findings suggest that there are at least four ways in which software architecture can be interpreted: as blueprint, language, decision, and as literature. These interpretations shed light on the misunderstandings that often arise when people speak about software architectures.

Our third paper is written by Kalle Lyytinen and Michael Newman and contains a wide-ranging theory explaining organisational change in the context of information systems implementation. This is a fascinating paper that contributes in many ways to our understanding of the effects of information systems implementation. First of all, the authors provide different *levels* of change to conceptualise the effects of information systems. Second, the authors provide different *types* of change: incremental change and step change. Finally, the authors provide the social-technical perspective as a vehicle to locate the changes. These building blocks provide the foundation for their *Punctuated Socio-Technical IS Change (PSIC)* model. The authors revisit a case previously identified in the literature to apply their model and to demonstrate how it is superior to a competing model.

We are keeping with the socio-technical theme in the fourth article of this *EJIS* issue. Using data from an emergency hospital in Sweden, Sunyoung Cho and colleagues demonstrate how Actor-Network Theory can be used to describe the effects of information systems implementation in a healthcare context. This is an accessible paper that competently handles the perhaps not-so-accessible terminology ordinarily associated with Actor-Network Theory. The authors augment their explanation with a dynamic approach where they divide their actor-network configurations

into several episodes, each episode starting with a significant event. The advantages of such an 'event-based actor network approach' are discussed.

The next paper, by Randolph Cooper and Russel Haines, introduces several important concepts in the context of team-based computing, specifically in the area of virtual workspaces. The authors zoom in on the concept of *workspace awareness*. This is the understanding that group members have of each other when they interact in a shared workspace. It is widely understood that such workspace awareness is significantly reduced in virtual workspaces, and that this, in turn, has a negative impact on the effectiveness of conducting virtual meetings. To examine this concept further, the authors look at three aspects of workspace awareness: *presence awareness*, *behaviour awareness*, and *insight awareness*. They then conduct a laboratory experiment in which they manipulate the virtual workspace to see whether either of these awareness elements can be improved.

The sixth paper, written by Dewi Rooslani Tojib and colleagues, is concerned with the user satisfaction of *employee portals*. These portals can perhaps best be conceptualised as 'employee support systems,' providing customised and personalised company information to employees. The adoption by companies of such portals is steadily increasing, but the extent to which these systems meet their expectations is not widely understood. In response to this challenge, the authors develop a questionnaire that can be used to identify the user satisfaction with employee portals. They demonstrate how such satisfaction can be broken down into five components: usefulness, confidentiality, ease of use, convenience of access, and attractiveness of the portal design.

Our next paper, written by Edgar Whitley and Ian Hosein from the London School of Economics (LSE), relates the fortunes of an LSE research project that investigated the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a national ID card, something which the UK government was (is) keen on doing. The authors describe how politicians subsequently discredited the findings, and how the LSE responded. It analyses this fascinating interaction between a university and a government using frameworks from science and technology studies.

Our eighth paper contains an analysis of 10 years of *EJIS* research. It is written by Yogesh Dwivedi and Jasna Kuljis. The paper examines the nature of the research published, the geographical background of the authors, its most prolific authors, and other interesting characteristics.

Finally, the last paper is written by Anthony Bryant and discusses the future of information systems. This Opinion Paper is the last in a series of papers that have appeared in *EJIS* on the 'identity' of the information systems discipline. It is introduced separately by our Editor-in-Chief Richard Baskerville and so I will not elaborate too much on it here.

Readers will note that these nine papers demonstrate significant geographical and methodological diversity. *EJIS* takes pride in showcasing this diversity, and considers it one of its main strengths. Of course, the papers in this issue are not only diverse but also of high quality, and I am sure you will enjoy reading them.