Editorial

This edition sees new Editors of the *Journal of Information Technology*. We would like to congratulate Igor Aleksander on his excellent work in getting the Journal off the ground and developing it so well over the last three years. Thanks also go to Henry Holloway for sterling work in the role of Associate Editor. We will be looking to further develop the concept of the Journal, its coverage, quality and readership, but the major changes will begin with Volume 5. The last two issues of Volume 4 will follow fairly closely the useful format established from the Journal's inception.

In this quarter's proceedings there are three main papers. John Crinnion makes the case for changing or refining systems development methodologies in order to utilize better Fourth Generation Languages and their associated techniques. The paper provides a description of the origins and development of 4GLs and evaluates traditional systems development approaches and prototyping techniques. However, the major part of the paper details the importance of evolutionary systems development approaches and discusses the key aspects of the methodology.

The other two papers hold in common the view that many implementation problems encountered when introducing information systems, or IT-based tools, derive from social, organizational or political factors rather than from deficiencies in the technology itself. Frank Land, Peter Lequesne and Indrajit Wijegunaratne provide a detailed account of their research programme and results on the introduction of IPSEs (Integrated Project Support Environments) into four private sector organizations. Their paper discusses the problems in measuring successful utilization and implemen-

tation, why and how IPSEs were introduced into these firms, and details the varying outcomes. The differing experiences of these organizations are compared and some valuable suggestions for implementation practice are put forward.

The paper is complemented to some degree by the work of Leslie Willcocks and Annabelle Mark on IT implementation in the public sector. Their paper utilizes the results of a three-year research study in the National Health Service to argue for a number of changes to how IT is implemented in the organization. The authors also suggest that their evidence and analysis may have implications and relevance for implementation practice outside the research organization.

Other papers consist of the fifth in the series by Henry Holloway on Information Technology and Company Policy – the focus here is on the International Stock Exchange; and a personal view by Igor Aleksander on neural computing. Here he suggests that neural computing carries four major promises, but is unlikely to be a replacement of conventional computing and artificial intelligence programs — more a form of complementary technology.

The rest of this edition contains a conference report, detailed book reviews, and shorter notices of books received. We will be looking to develop considerably these aspects of the Journal over the next three issues. We always welcome comments on and ideas for the Journal, and these would be particularly useful in the next few months as we review policy and plan future volumes.

Anne Leeming
Leslie Willcocks