Editorial

This issue represents what will be the finalized version of the Journal resulting from the series of changes we planned from June 1989. In that time we have changed publisher to Chapman & Hall, published a detailed policy for the Journal, and overseen moves toward the present distinctive cover design, and the American A4 size the Journal will now be published in. In all this Chapman & Hall have been highly supportive, and their contribution to design and regularizing publication has been much appreciated and valued. In our opinion, the result is a much more accessible and attractive Journal for the reader. The Journal also now has an expanding pool of what is at present forty-eight referees, drawn upon to review the ever-increasing number of papers we receive. Indeed the major reason, apart from increased legibility, for moving to the new large format, was our growing inability to publish all the papers we were receiving without creating a waiting period for authors that would exceed a year. While this is common practice with many journals, it also becomes counter-productive in as fast a moving set of subject areas as that covered by the *JIT*. It also becomes highly frustrating for intending authors. As a result our policy will be that, once a paper has been refereed, accepted and finalized, we will endeavour to publish it within six months of receipt of the acceptable version. Intending authors should note that this means that the Notes for Contributors appearing in every issue of the JIT should be followed very carefully, otherwise delays in publication will occur, and may result in the paper becoming dated. This publication policy may well mean that we will need to increase the size of the Journal yet again at some future date.

Theme issue for December 1992

Readers continue to comment favourably on the theme format. The human and organizational issues theme addressed in Volume 6, 3/4 (December 1991) was very well received, and this has encouraged us to address another theme for Volume 7, 4 (December 1992). The theme will be *Information Technology and Marketing*. This edition will be jointly edited by Professor Laurent Maruani of HEC, Paris and Leslie Willcocks of Templeton College, Oxford. Contributions for this theme issue are now invited. The theme will be interpreted broadly to cover how information and IT relate to, support or transform any or all marketing activities, with the latter again conceived broadly. This may include, for example, market and marketing research, organizing for marketing, relationships with customers, product innovation, promotional effort, pricing techniques and technologies, place and distribution channels, and marketing planning and decision-making. The theme will also cover IT for improving competitiveness and furthering the organization's position in the marketplace and its service to customers/clients/consumers.

This listing should not be seen as exhaustive. The timetable for contributions is:

January – June 1992 – Call for Papers
July 10th – Paper must be with the Editors for refereeing
August 1st – Notification of acceptance/rejection of paper
September 3rd – Final copy of paper must be with the Editors for publication.

Anyone wishing to contribute a paper should first contact Leslie Willcocks, OXIIM, Templeton College, Kennington, Oxford OX1 5NY, UK, or Professor Laurent Maruani, HEC, 1 Rue de la Liberation, 78350 Jouy-en-Josas, Paris, France.

This Issue

This March issue presents a selection of papers that cover a wide range of issues. Eileen Trauth and Douglas Pitt provide a high level paper on developments in the telecommunications industry. They look in detail at the application of the competitive paradigm in both the UK and US telecommunications industries and argue that early and late adopters of this paradigm may well experience different benefits and outcomes. Their sober conclusion is that despite many of the assumptions in the literature, there may be many reasons why different nations need to follow different rather than similar telecommunications paths.

At another level, and on a different subject, Janos Barat provides an original contribution to how critical success factor analysis can be used for determining top managers' information need in managing the business. The originality in Janos Barat's succinct paper lies with the method he proposes and the software tool he has developed. A third paper, by Shirin Madon, switches attention once again. She provides details of seminal research on applying information systems to rural development administration in India. Of particular interest in her paper

are the reasons for early relative failure of information systems in this Indian context, and how the situation became changed over time through a different set of approaches by a range of actors.

The paper by Bharat Lakhanpal focuses on researching the role of task characteristics in establishing a suitable systems development environment. Putting forward a contingency approach, the author argues that a task's degree of structure, interdependency, scope and 'periodicity' should be taken into account when choosing a systems development approach to computerizing that task or elements of it. In the same spirit, though on a broader canvas, David Grimshaw reviews the literature for conceptual frameworks used for understanding information systems. He rejects these on the grounds that collectively they produce a range of concepts that are not mutually consistent. He then puts forward a way of integrating several different approaches using a three dimensional approach based on asking questions around tasks, technology and time frame. The final paper, by David Birch and Neil McEvoy, focuses on an area much neglected in both the literature and business practice alike, namely risk and information systems. In a very useful paper they provide much clarification about the concepts to be used in this field. The paper is also notable for offering a rigorously developed but practical approach to risk analysis and managing the risks inherent in organizational IS. They also provide practical examples of software they have developed for risk management.

The Journal concludes with detailed reviews of two recent conferences, one on Computers in the City, the other on Making IT Strategy Succeed. Our policy here is to provide a detailed description and critical analysis of selected conferences and also books that deliver on our policy objectives. In some cases a review might be the length of a short paper. The intention behind the conference reviews is to make them of considerable use to readers who could not, but would have liked to, attend the event in question.

Forthcoming papers include:

Systems design: theory and reality. David Avison *et al.*
Putting IT in its place: a polemic for the nineties. Michael Earl.
Evaluating investments in IT. Barbara Farbey, Frank Land and David Targett.
The use of executive information systems in measuring business performance. James Holohan.
Software standards: an information requirements framework. Theodora Ngosi and John Jenkins.
Reengineering tools. Robert Moreton.
Methodological requirements for information systems development. Sachidanandam Sakthivel.
Information economics. Devra Wiseman.

Anne Leeming
Leslie Willcocks