Editorial

Developments

This issue sees some major changes for the Journal. Leslie Willcocks moves to Editor-in-Chief. All papers and correspondence should be addressed to him in the first instance. A new editorial team is now in place. Gerd Islei of the University of Oxford becomes European Editor, Catherine Griffiths of Imperial College, London World Editor, and Mary Lacity of University of Missouri – St Louis is our new US/Americas Editor. Each paper for refereeing will be reviewed by the editorial team and assigned to the relevant regional editor. It will then be refereed by three people. The Journal recognizes the fast moving nature of the subject area – the new editorial arrangements are designed to speed up administration, and as from 1 January 1996 we undertake to complete the assessment process within four months of receipt of paper. A number of additional changes will be implemented in the first half of 1996, all designed to build further on the strengths of the Journal and make it even more accessible and useful to both contributors and readers.

This issue

We continue to publish papers that cover a wide spread of subjects and issues. Our aim is to publish papers that provide critical perspectives on advanced information and communication technologies, with emphasis on their organizational implications and management. The papers this quarter pursue this objective well.

Angèle Cavaye advances the participation in the systems development debate by reframing it around inter-organizational systems (IOS), and the involvement of users, including customers outside the organization. She finds contingencies for participation in the development of IOS are different from those in internal systems development, and provides extensive discussion and analysis of these contingencies. The second paper also looks at inter-organizational systems, in this case Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Bob Galliers, Paula and Paul Swatman focus in particular on how strategic IS planning can provide a suitable superstructure within which EDI implementation may be considered. The premise of the paper is that EDI should be viewed as a technology able to give an organization comparative advantage if used stategically as part of a process of business reengineering. Felix Tan's paper also focuses on the theme of strategy formulation, but he is interested in the issue of IT responsiveness. His study of 88 companies enables a series of insights into the linkages between types of business strategy and the degree of IT responsiveness required and actually possessed by commercial organizations.

Albert Lederer and Rajesh Mirani contribute a paper analysing the anticipated benefits from 178 systems projects. The analysis contains a series of interesting findings and shows nine top anticipated benefit factors, with the enabling of business redesign being the most important factor. The biggest expense, however, was on projects where the main benefit involved job reductions. Quantification of benefits was perceived by respondents as an important aid to getting the potential benefits understood and accepted amongst senior managers. David Wastell and Annechris Sewards also contribute a useful empirical study, this time of the British manufacturing sector and the use of IS amongst small and medium firms. They found most firms in the control stage of Nolan's stage growth model, and that organizational size was a significant influence on the degree of IS sophistication. They also produce findings on the influence a range of factors have on IS project success amongst the respondent companies.

The final paper, by Dan Remenyi and Brian Williams, provides an overview of approaches to research methodology for the study of IS. The Journal has published some methodology papers in the past, and readily welcomes future papers that seek to make a significant contribution to understanding the research process, and operationalizing research studies.

Forthcoming papers include

A theme issue on IT Outsourcing: Theory and Practice. Contributors are:

Myun Cheon and Varun Grover
Thomas Clark, Robert Zmud and Gordon McCray
Jonathan Cronk and John Sharp
Jaak Jurison
Robert Klepper
Leon de Looff
Kerry McLellan, Barbara Marcolin and Paul Beamish
Marion Sobol and Uday Apte

Papers in 1996 include

Organizing for crisis response. Linda Jo Calloway and Peter Keen.
Deconstructing contexts in interpreting methodology. Heather Watson and Trevor Wood-Harper.