



Editorial

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In this issue, we are proud to present a 'first' for *Knowledge Management Research & Practice (KMRP)*, in the shape of our first-ever Special Issue. The topic is 'Knowledge Management and e-Research Technologies: To codify or to collaborate?' and I am delighted to extend particular thanks to our inaugural Guest Editors for this Special Issue, Will Venters of the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, U.K. and Elaine Ferneley of Salford Business School, U.K. Their hard work is much appreciated not only by those of us at *KMRP* but also by the contributors. Their Guest Editorial sets the scene for this investigation of the relevance of various technologies to knowledge management, at a time when interest in the technology aspect of KM seems to be on the rise again.

In addition to the Special Issue papers, we also have two regular papers. The first is 'An approach for ontology development and assessment using a quality framework' by Lila Rao, Han Reichgelt and Kweku-Muata Osei-Bryson. This paper also has some resonance with the theme of the Special Issue, as it sets out an approach to the construction of ontologies illustrated by the example of one constructed for the IT infrastructure domain in a university. Rao *et al.* follow a hybrid approach, combining the technique of laddering with the use of existing ontologies from the related literature to produce the initial ontology. Competency questions are then used to evaluate the ontology's completeness: these are developed using knowledge elicitation techniques such as card sorts. The case example is discussed in detail, with an emphasis on the support that the ontology might offer for disaster recovery planning.

The second paper is 'The effect of applying tacit knowledge on maintenance performance: an empirical study of the energy sector in the U.K. and Arab countries' by Mamdouh Refaiy and Ashraf Labib. Refaiy and Labib present the results of a questionnaire survey examining the relationships between the sharing of tacit knowledge and maintenance performance. Sharing of tacit knowledge is represented by six variables. Maintenance performance is represented by measures of three different aspects: mean time between failures, mean time to repair, and mean waiting time. The survey obtained responses from 88 managers in the U.K. and 128 in six Arab countries. Results on the six knowledge-sharing variables were significantly different between the two groups. For example, U.K. respondents gave higher scores to the variables 'Managers gather information from production sites' and 'Managers engage through interaction with external experts and informal meetings', while Arab respondents gave higher scores to 'Managers create work practice encouraging learning, teaching, and sharing knowledge' and 'Managers facilitate communication between people through IT in the organisation'. However, despite these differences, each of the three maintenance performance measures shows highly significant ($p < 0.01$) positive correlations with at least two of the six knowledge sharing variables. Similarly, each of the knowledge sharing variables has a highly significant positive correlation with at least one performance measure.

We hope you will enjoy both the Special Issue papers and the regular papers. If you would like to propose a Special Issue topic for *KMRP*, or indeed you have any other suggestions, please contact the editor (j.s.edwards@aston.ac.uk).