

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Dr. Tor J. Larsen introduces this issue.

He discusses the fierce and healthy debate questioning the foundations of the academic field of information systems and information technology and its contribution to practice. Researchers within the field of “Global Studies” should follow this debate closely, and actively contribute to it. Among the many issues raised, the definition of information systems and the pursuit of theory are discussed.

ARTICLES

MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS IN LESS DEVELOPED ENVIRONMENTS: EXPERIENCE FROM GREECE

Authors: Vassilis Serafeimidis, University of Surrey, UK; Georgios I. Doukidis, Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece

Information technology is a major element of most organizational changes attempting to improve organizational performance and market position. The success of such technological investments lies primarily on their successful management and integration with the targeted business context. This research has taken place in Greece where a number of organizations have been investigated through a field survey and two in-depth case studies. The objective of the paper is to identify and analyze the main issues associated with the decision making process of managing investments in information technology in the context of less developed national environments. A number of conclusions are drawn in the areas of how, who, why and when of the IT investment management.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIFFUSION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A STUDY OF CHINA.

Authors: Robert J. Mockler, St. John’s University, New York; Dorothy G. Dologite, City University of New York-Baruch College; Yu Chen and Mei Qi Fang, Renmin (People’s) University of China

In addition to the internal organizational factors affecting IT diffusion in individual companies everywhere in the world, four external factors can be identified as having particular relevance to the magnitude and rate of diffusion of information technology (IT) in general in developing countries – political and economic environment, ownership, level and importance of technology, and competitive environment. The impact of these four external context factors on IT diffusion are discussed. In addition, steps which managers have taken, or can take, to overcome not only identified external problems, but also internal organizational problems in successfully diffusing information technology in

companies in developing countries, are also discussed. The focus of the study is on China.

GLOBAL COMPARISONS OF KEY ISSUES IN IS MANAGEMENT: EXTENDING INITIAL SELECTION PROCEDURE AND AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN NORWAY.

Author: Petter Gottschalk, Norwegian School of Management

Norway Information systems (IS) departments face many challenges in today's rapidly changing environment. One approach to understanding these challenges is to survey IS managers to elicit what they consider are key issues. Studies of key IS management issues have been conducted for some years in many nations and regions. However, most of these surveys lack a theoretical basis for the selection of key issues. Furthermore, most studies have used a single-round or a multi-round Delphi method. The chapter presents methodological issues and choices for a survey on key issues and choices for a survey on key issues in IS management which was conducted in Norway in 1998. A three step procedure for key issues selection is introduced, and a Q-method analysis is adopted. The Chapter presents results from the Q-sort survey and analysis.

THE EXPERT OPINION

An interview with Steve Robinson: Manager of Information Technical Services at Russell Corporation.

The interview is conducted **Charles a. Snyder, Chetan S. Sankar, and Rajesh Sehgal**, Auburn University.

The interview discusses the factors that influenced Russell Corporation to move to Central America. The disadvantages and important issues of moving to offshore manufacturing are discussed.

THE BOOK REVIEW

Written by **Edward M. Roche**, The Diebold Group and Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc. He reviews "Infraglobe: infrastructure and the management of knowledge in multinational enterprises" by Claudio Ciborra and Angelo Failla, Preface by Tomaso Quattrin, Milano: RCS Libri s.p.a., 1998. Infraglobe is a book that is ahead of its time. Supported by La Fondazione IBM Italia, it contains a variety of thoughtful papers that examine how information technology infrastructure is changing in the multinational enterprise. What is interesting is that some of the key observations run contrary to the field today. Some of the conclusions developed in the book were discussed by professor Ciborra at the ICIS 1998 meeting in Helsinki.

