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EDITORIAL PREFACE:

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Jafar M. H. Ali, Kuwait University, Kuwait

The forces of globalization, privatization and liberalization are sweeping the global, regional and country economies including in the Middle East. The Middle East as a region exhibits some unique socio-economic characteristics which potentially both inhibit and facilitate IT development and adoption. For example, the region is characterized by contrasting national economies and includes both oil rich sparsely populated smaller countries like the GCC and less developed economies with larger populations such as Egypt. At the same time, the region is culturally homogeneous. This unique regional context provides a challenge for IT researchers

ARTICLES:

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE SUCCESS FACTORS IN SAUDI ARABIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Said S. Al-Gahtani, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

IT acceptance is a necessary condition for effectiveness and competency in the information age. However, there is a recognized rejection of these technologies in advanced societies let alone in less developed societies. As most technology is designed in developed societies, we expect there would be some social and cultural gap with less developed societies. Failing to consider the proper social context of economic, sociopolitical, and cultural dimensions can inhibit the success of the process and increase the risks of failure. This study, based on data from fifty six private and public organizations in Saudi Arabia, examines individual, technological, and organizational factors affecting computer acceptance as reflected in computer usage and user satisfaction. We contend that social and cultural influences could bridge the gap towards a better understanding of IT acceptance if certain "rational factors" are taken into account.

E-GOVERNMENT FOR ARAB COUNTRIES

Alexander Pons, University of Miami, USA

This article focuses on the potential of instigating an e-government system within and possibly throughout the Arab world. E-government is currently being adopted in many countries throughout the world. We analyze the problems and difficulties encountered in promoting e-government in the Middle East and highlight the potential opportunities. Many countries have and continue to benefit from the acceptance of e-government; understanding its applicability and effectiveness beyond and within the Arab countries is of vital importance. Our analysis presents a perspective on regional e-government and utilization of technology within and among Arab countries. We also propose the E-

Government System Framework that solves many problems associated with the adoption of e-government in the Arab world

ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS OF E-BANKING: A STUDY OF THE MANAGERIAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE BANKING INDUSTRY IN OMAN

Abdulwahed Mo. Khalfan, and Abdulridha Alshawaf, Kuwait University, Kuwait

This article explores the potential impeding factors for the wide adoption of electronic commerce (EC) applications in the Omani banking industry. Data were collected using a questionnaire complemented with semi-structured interviews, and review of internal banking documents.

The participants were IS executives and managers. One of the major inhibiting factors is the lack of top management support. Information privacy and security issues were identified as serious inhibiting factors. Other factors such as power relationships (e.g., conflict between managers that arise during the process of IS/IT adoption), and lack of investment in EC applications were found less significant. The findings are relevant to businesses in Arab countries in particular and developing countries in general.

THE EXPERT OPINION:

An Interview with Dr. Fadi Shehaib, CIO, National Bank of Kuwait, conducted by Jafar M. H. Ali, Kuwait University, Kuwait.

National Bank of Kuwait is considered by far the largest and the most profitable publicly held financial institute in Kuwait. Dr. Shehaib provides insights into the development of IT in the Middle East and GCC countries, as well as describes the successful use of IT at their bank.

BOOK REVIEW: GOING WIRELESS: TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS WITH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Jaclyn Easton. Review written by Joo Eng Lee-Partridge, Central Connecticut State University.

In her book, the author provides the business community with an informative overview of current trends in wireless mobile applications. The focus of her book is on using mobile technology linked through wireless networks to create business applications that truly provide meaning to the concept of “anytime, anywhere.” Predictions about the future are also made.