EDITORIAL

It is a pleasure to provide you with this special issue of the Australian Journal of Information Systems dedicated to Knowledge Management.

Sceptics continue to argue that knowledge management does not contribute anything new in solving organizational problems and in essence is just a 're-dressing' of old ideas to justify introduction of expensive computer infrastructure. However, the camp of such sceptics is getting smaller and smaller with the increased acceptance of the importance and value of knowledge processes in the success of modern organizations. It is now commonly recognized that knowledge is a special kind of resource that needs to be managed. However, recent studies and field reports regarding knowledge management initiatives in leading organizations worldwide clearly show that traditional organisational technology and management techniques are seldom capable of capturing and enhancing organisational knowledge bases. There is a need to develop new advanced approaches, which are specifically devised to stimulate knowledge creation and sharing supported by modern IT systems.

It was a hard task to choose papers for this volume out of the twenty initial submissions. The field of knowledge management is grounded on many diverse reference disciplines such as Decision Science, Management and Organization Science, Economics, Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Information Science as well as Sociology, Anthropology, Linguistics, Politics, Psychology. The eleven papers that were selected for this special issue bring concepts from many of these diverse fields in introducing their results and providing justification of the value of the studies. This creates a somewhat blurred picture of what is and what is *not* in the scope of the field of knowledge management. I have deliberately selected papers with diverse views and approaches to allow the reader to grasp the breadth as well as depth of the field. Therefore the volume contains contributions from researchers and practitioners from Australia, Europe, Asia and the USA and present multi-disciplinary views on knowledge management.

There is no visible link between these papers, yet one can see the way they complement each other in demonstrating the ways knowledge is treated in different contexts and the important role of technology in creating knowledge from information contained in a variety of organisational documents and making knowledge processes resulting in effective organisational learning. The papers can be broadly divided into two categories. Papers in the first category deal with the theoretical concepts such as knowledge creation and organisational learning which are intrinsic to building and exploiting intelligent assets. Papers in the second category report on practice and implications of knowledge management initiatives. All papers contain illustrations of the issues raised from various organizational studies or reflections on personal experiences.

Papers by Pigott, Hobbs and Gammack Damsgaard and Scheepers, Morrissey, Schmid, as well as Marsh and Burke, and Linger and Warne propose some new concepts, architectures and approaches, which allow dealing with challenges in handling less structured environments and entities of information in order to transform them into useful knowledge. These authors also address the innovative ways that technology can be used for supporting knowledge management needs.

The second group of papers present some results of exploratory studies in the implementation of knowledge management strategies. Handzic discuss some results from experimenting with decision support system prototype as a means of contextual knowledge exploration and capture. Lauer and Tanniru propose an approach of reviewing knowledge resources in the organization and matching them to major organisational goals (knowledge audit) and a case study illustrating the application of the proposed methodology. The authors come up with some recommendations and discuss future implications of such an approach. Papers by Timbrell, Andrews and Gable and Law and Lee-Partridge present results from the studies of organisational knowledge management in relation to transfer of best practice and exploring the levels of understanding of issues, concerns and requirements by chief information officers (CIOs) and senior IS managers. These papers are also interesting from the point of view of the research methodology they use in analysing the collected data. A paper by Warne, Ali and Agostino from DSTO and Pascoe from University of Canberra draws on experience the authors gained from ethnographic study of social learning.

I would like to especially thank a group of twenty reviewers, including international experts in knowledge management for their help in selecting the finest quality papers for this issue. I would like to thank all the authors for the their contributions and considerable effort in meeting tight deadlines and high standards that have been imposed by the reviewers. I would also like to thank the Editor of the AJIS, Prof Rob McGregor for giving me the opportunity to undertake this challenging project on behalf of the knowledge management research community.

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