One of the most profound developments of the past decade was the emergence of e-business, which has revolutionized the process of business transactions, collaboration, and management of an organization using the Internet, networks, and other digital technologies. E-business has changed the dynamics of competitive forces across all industries and become an essential component for any organization interested in achieving competitive advantage. While managing an e-business rapidly emerged as one of the most important tasks for managers, many managers still lack the core e-business knowledge needed to develop effective e-business strategies and solutions. To make the manager’s job more challenging, many e-business models have yet to prove their sustainability and profitability.

How e-business affects organizations is a complicated, yet important question that requires a variety of conceptual, methodological, and technical approaches. At the early stage of e-business development in business organizations, organizations create the intranet-based online repositories of information that can be updated instantaneously and retrieved interactively. The telephone directory, benefits information, training materials, corporate newsletters, and employee handbooks can be updated as changes occur, reducing paper, printing, and mailing costs. The intranet-based online repositories are an inexpensive solution because of the intranet’s simple technical features, low implementation cost, and limited functions.

As the integration of e-business becomes more advanced, organizations develop a richer set of e-collaboration applications to create an environment where separate organizations as well as diverse groups within an organization can exchange ideas, share information, and work on common projects. E-collaboration applications have further expanded into all activities of the supply chain and emerged as the most cost-effective means of supply chain operation. E-collaboration applications streamline communications with business partners by automating all of the business processes involved in the production and inventory management. However, to achieve the full benefits of e-collaboration, organizations need far-reaching organizational changes beyond the streamlining of the SOPs. Business processes should be redesigned and integrated with business partners’ value chains, and employees’ roles should be redefined.

One way to promote widespread adoption of e-business is to develop technology standards that can be used to make information flow seamlessly between organizations and within an organization. XML is one of the key components in e-business systems integration. XML-based UCCnet for product data synchronization is one such standard technology that retailers will have to take
advantage of for seamlessly integrating product-related data between suppliers and retailers.

The e-business systems in the next generation are likely to be based on Web services. Web services are self-contained, modular applications that can be described, published, located, and invoked over the Internet. Service (application) integration becomes the innovation of next-generation e-business, as businesses move more of their existing IT applications to the Web, taking advantage of loosely coupled, dynamically bound Internet-based components. Web services are based on a core set of enabling technologies, including XML, SOAP, WSDL, and UDDI, which reflect the work of researchers and consultants from a variety of companies and industry organizations. The adoption of Web services by business organizations will dramatically alter the way business is conducted in the digital economy.

The mission of the new International Journal of E-Business Research is to provide an international forum for researchers and practitioners to advance the knowledge and practice of all facets of electronic business. Emerging e-business theories, architectures, and technologies are emphasized to stimulate and disseminate cutting-edge information to research and business communities in a timely fashion. This journal will also develop a comprehensive framework of e-business by taking a multidisciplinary approach to understanding e-business and its implications for businesses and economies. This journal will serve as an integrated e-business knowledge base for those who are interested in contributing to the advancement of e-business theory and practice through a variety of research methods, including theoretical, experimental, case, and survey research methods.

Articles in this inaugural issue address the most important issues and questions related to e-business that affect organizations and management practices. In the first article, entitled “Two Basic Types of Business-to-Business Integration,” Frank Goethals, Jacques Vandenbulcke, Wilfried Lemahieu, Monique Snoeck, and Bjorn Cumps of Katholieke Universiteit Leuven argue that there exist two basic forms of business-to-business integration (B2Bi), namely, extended enterprise integration and market B2Bi. This intriguing paper, the first to discuss the two basic types of B2Bi in such detail, clarifies the meaning of both concepts, shows that the difference between both is fundamental, and discusses the consequences of the difference in the realm of Web services development. This article lays the groundwork for further research, for example, toward more concrete information systems design and implementation methodologies for both types of B2Bi.

Our second article, written by professor Mahesh S. Raisinghani of the University of Dallas and Turan Melemez, Lijie Zou, Chris Paslowski, Irma Kikvidze, Susanne Taha, and Klaus Simons of Purdue University, is entitled “E-Business Models in B2B: A Process-Based Categorization and Analysis of Business-to-Business Models.” This in-depth study provides a process-based approach to B2B e-commerce with examples from industry. The article examines both the buy and the sell side based on a process-related approach and provides extensive insights for further comparative research and evaluation of products, services, and models.

The third article is by professors Ye-Sho Chen of Louisiana State University, Guoqing Chen of the Tsinghua University, and Soushan Wu of Chang-Gung University and is entitled “Issues and Opportunities in E-Business Research: A Simonian Perspective.” These authors attempt to tie together five seemingly unrelated topics of Simon and his colleagues (skew distributions, near decomposability, causal reasoning, effectual reasoning, and attention management) and provide a holistic framework of attention-based in-
The five articles presented in this inaugural issue of the International Journal of E-Business Research highlight the diverse aspects of e-business and its role in driving the digital economy. These articles provide an overview of the most interesting issues that need to be studied from multiple perspectives. It is hoped that research and business communities will benefit significantly from sharing cutting-edge information and discussing current theory and best practices in their e-business endeavors. I would like to express my gratitude to the authors and the reviewers for their invaluable contribution and collaboration. Finally, I sincerely thank Jan Travers, senior managing editor of Idea Group Publishing, for her continued help with the IJEBR.