The business environment of today’s globalized economy is very dynamic, highly competitive and rapidly changing. This is also due to the new waves of information and communication technologies (ICTS) such as e-services and Web 2.0. As a consequence the business community is facing problems of assimilating and integrating rapidly changing information technologies in the workplace, recruiting IT personnel and especially retaining IT professionals. Businesses are also developing self service systems and IT service management methodologies and standards in order to improve the design, management and delivery of IT services both internally and externally to the corporation.

The articles in this issue provide frameworks and methodologies to deal with the issues mentioned above. Three of the articles have been selected and invited from the 2008 International Conference on Information Resources Management (Conf-IRM), that has taken place in May 2008 in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada.

The first article is entitled “Self-service systems: investigating the perceived importance of various quality dimensions” and is written by Călin Gurău from GSCM – Montpellier Business School. Based on an analysis of the main streams of research focusing on online self-service systems, the paper identifies eight quality dimensions defined by previous studies. The analysis of primary data permits then a ranking of these quality dimensions in relation to users’ perceptions. The study also investigates the influence of users’ personal characteristics (gender, age, Internet usage frequency and online self-service usage frequency) on the perceived importance of such quality dimensions, providing specific insights about the needs and wants of various categories of customers.

The second article, entitled “Toward a Better understanding of the Assimilation of Telehealth Systems” written by Joachim Jean-Jules and Alain O. Villeneuve of the Université de Sherbrooke is a theoretical article. Borrowing from institutional, structuration and organizational learning theories, the authors propose a conceptual model of the determinants relevant for the assimilation of telehealth systems in
healthcare organizations. The results are summarized in eight conjectures and a conceptual model. With this article the authors hope to contribute to guide research and managerial actions directed toward integrating telehealth systems in the workplace. In fact a number of healthcare authorities are considering the adoption of telehealth into mainstream clinical care, bringing telehealth technology out of experimental settings into mainstream clinical care.

The third article, entitled “An IT-Architecture to Align E-Recruiting and Retention Processes” written by Andreas Eckhardt and Sven Laumer from Goethe-University, uses a design science approach to develop an IT-architecture of e-recruiting and retention processes. This architecture could increase knowledge transfer, thereby improving the adjustment and performance of both e-recruiting and retention processes. The authors expect that the increased amount of data gained through the suggested performance measurement subsystems might offer management a variety of new strategic options for continuing to exist in a “War for IT-Talent”. In fact, one of the top issues for CIOs nowadays is the recruiting and retention of qualified IT-professionals. Therefore companies are in dire need of new strategies and integrated approaches in human resources.

The last article entitled “Aligning Six Sigma and ITIL to Improve IT Service Management” written by Peter Chan, Hewlett Packard, Shauntell Durant, consultant, Verna Mae Gall, University of Maryland University College, and Mahesh Raisinghani, TWU School of Management develops a framework for leveraging ITIL and Six Sigma with IT Service Management. This framework, the authors argue, might be useful to organizations implementing IT Service Management (ITSM) and creating quality standards to design, deliver, and manage IT services to meet or exceed an agreed level of quality. ITSM uses the best practices of IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) that informs IT management what needs to be done and how it will get done from the process perspective. However ITIL does not provide a method for measuring quality or identifying and completing process improvement projects. By integrating the Six Sigma quality methodology, IT management will have the methodology and tools for measuring quality and improving processes. Adopting Six Sigma principles also should help IT managers to focus on their business strategy and customers, to manage proactively based on facts, and to improve and reinforce collaboration across the enterprise.

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Ada Scupola is an associate professor at the Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies, Roskilde University, Denmark. She holds a PhD in social sciences from Roskilde University, an MBA from the University of Maryland at College Park, USA and a MSc from the University of Bari, Italy. She is the editor-in-chief of the International Journal of E-Services and Mobile Applications. Her main research interests are e-services, adoption and diffusion of e-commerce and e-services in SMEs, ICTs in clusters of companies, the impact of e-commerce on industrial and organizational structures. She is collaborating and has collaborated to several national and international research projects on the above subjects. Her research has been published in several international journals among which the Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations, The Journal of Information Science, The Journal of Global Information Technology Management, Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems, The Journal of Electronic Commerce in Developing Countries and in numerous book chapters and international conferences.