Today’s society is fraught with a myriad of constrained opportunities. These challenges are indeed daunting, and the need for change is ever present. The mission of International Journal of Information Systems and Social Change (IJISSC) is to provide an international forum for practitioners and researchers from both the social and natural sciences, along with information systems professionals, software developers, and vendors, to exchange, share, and present useful and innovative ideas and work. It also enables the presentation and distribution of ground-breaking and original ideas and concepts, which can shape future directions of research. These, when applied, can enable policy makers, government officials, business managers, and social workers to spread over various advanced techniques and new applications of information systems. IJISSC also encourages discussions on how information systems can promote social change, and also in turn, how the advances brought about by these social changes can affect the growth in, and future application of, information systems.

IJISSC examines current, state-of-the-art research in the areas of information systems and social change, and the interactions, linkages, applications, and support of social change using information systems. This journal encompasses theoretical, analytical, and empirical research, comprehensive reviews of relevant research, technical reports, book reviews, and also case studies emphasizing the use of new frameworks, principles, technologies, methods, and techniques.

There are many valuable contributions in this issue. Electronic waste is a major problem in today’s society, and information systems by their very nature are a major contributor to the problem. Tim Lynar, Simon, Ric Herbert, and William Chivers explain their approach to mitigating the problem. Computing-intensive applications tend to require either a supercomputer or a cluster of ordinary desktop computers. Lynar and his colleagues have built a cluster using not new computers but obsolete computers destined for the scrapheap. They show that this cluster outperforms a standard new desktop computer, and conclude that it can be expanded to perform as well as a smaller cluster of new computers. While of course the computers in their cluster will eventually become scrap, this second life that they have been given averts the manufacture of the new computers that would otherwise be required in a cluster, and so helps to diminish the growing problem of electronic waste.

Multi-criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) is an emerging quantitative tool available to support decisions in situations with high uncertainty and variability. MCDA allows integration of technical information and expert judgment for transparent and justifiable decision making support. An ar-
ticle by Dr. Yatsalo and his colleagues introduces DECERNS (Decision Evaluation in Complex Risk Network Systems), a web-based distributed decision support system for multi-criteria analysis in a wide range of applications, including selecting spatially-explicit land management alternatives. It is probably the first comprehensive decision support system that integrates advanced GIS functions and simultaneously implements several MCDA methods and tools for studying robustness of management decision. The paper provides an overview of DECERNS architecture and illustrates its application for a housing site selection.

Allan Lichtman provides the first long-range scientific forecast of the 2012 American presidential election. The forecast is derived from the Keys to the White House, a historically based prediction system that Allan Lichtman and Vladimir Keilis-Borok, founder of the International Institute of Earthquake Prediction Theory and Mathematical Geophysics developed in 1981. The Keys are based on the theory that presidential elections are primarily referenda on how the party had governed the country. Thus, campaigns have little effect on election outcomes and the fate of an incumbent party is largely in its own hands. There is little that the challenging party can do to influence the outcome of a presidential election.

The Keys system combines judgmental and non-judgmental indicators, which is consistent with recent trends in forecasting methodology. The system retrospectively accounts for the popular vote winners of every American presidential election since 1860 and prospectively has forecast correctly the outcomes of the past seven elections (1984-2008). A version of the Keys that produces numerical estimates of presidential election results has forecast the two-party vote for the incumbent party candidate since 1984 with a mean error of just 1.92 percent. A numerical prediction published in Foresight: The International Journal of Applied Forecasting came within .36 percent of the actual popular vote percentage for John McCain in 2008. Three and a half years before the 2012 election a preliminary prediction based on the Keys points to a solid re-election victory for Barack Obama. The Keys also reveal the specific conditions under which this prediction could change.

In this thoughtful discussion on mindful practices that should be adopted by qualitative researchers in information systems, Professor Kay Fielden has explored many dimensions of mindfulness that come from diverse discipline areas including anthropology, ethics, behavioral science, sociology, social science and psychology. Professor Fielden’s multidisciplinary background in mathematics, computer science and social ecology as well as her spiritual practices have allowed her to broaden her focus in this discussion on adopting a novel approach to training IS researchers in an ever-increasing world of applied computing. To incorporate such a multidisciplinary approach in one person is unusual in our narrowly-focused world. This debate is rigorously argued, well-informed and backed with interdisciplinary literature. Debates on the role and nature of qualitative research have a legitimate place in Information Systems as evidenced by Michael Myer’s excellent pages on Qualitative Research on ISWorld. This paper is a philosophical debate designed to investigate the many facets of mindfulness and then to place these within the researcher qualities required at the various research phases as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln in their summation of the five phases of qualitative research.

The main contribution of “Managing Demographic Data Inconsistencies in Healthcare Information Systems” consists of an analysis of demographic data inconsistency in the health information systems and the development of some solutions. The focus is on demographic and radiological data since most of the inconsistency and synchronization problems are related to it. In fact the physician comments, markup and reports are key parts of the medical record but usually stored in a different format. So the demographic data accompanying the queried patient’s information may be in a format inconsistent with the requirements for the electronic medical record and usually will not propagate throughout the system-of-systems as required. Hence the need for a data exchange channel that guarantee the quality of the transferred information within the distributed e-health system.

The proposed solutions by Esmahi & Badidi consist of an XML bus for data exchange and consolidation in the e-health system-of-systems and an RDF framework for attaching a metadata or semantic description to the queried data. The proposed solutions are simple and easy to integrate within the existing health information systems,
and may be of great interest to system designers, developers, and information system managers. The implemented solutions also contribute toward the proposal for extending the standard protocols currently used in health IS such as HL7 and DICOM.

This journal is a long overdue for the most important field on the Earth that would expand and intensify applications of information technology in social management and development. It will integrate many different disciplines such as information systems, social sciences, natural sciences, and both the for-profit and nonprofit organizations of the entire society. Information technology should be used extensively in all aspects of our society such as legal information systems, education information systems, healthcare information systems, social security information systems, etc. Many of the advances in our society are driven by advancing information technology. Within the various areas of social issues, information systems are employed to address various problems, strategically and/or operationally. The inherent size and complexity of society management make information systems even more essential for effective decision making.

Our target audience is very broad since the journal is aiming at professionals with different disciplines and managers in many categories. Among them, there could be social scientists, natural scientists, government officers, strategic planners, policy makers, administrators, researchers, as well as all kind of decision makers and problem solvers. Moreover, students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in many related disciplines such as public administration, social sciences, behavioral science, business, and politics, will get a taste of the real world applications of information systems and researchers will be updated constantly.

Together, let’s celebrate the birth of IJISSC, nurture its growth, contribute to its strength, and protect its health.

John Wang is a full professor at MSU. Having received a scholarship award, he came to the USA and completed his PhD in operations research from Temple University. He has published more than 100 refereed papers and six books. He is the editor-in-chief of Int. J. of Applied Management Science, Int. J. of Information Systems and Supply Chain Management, Int. J. of Information Systems in the Service Sector. Also, he is the editor of Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining (4 volumes)-2e, Data Warehousing and Mining: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (6 volumes). His long-term research goal is on the synergy of operations research, data mining and cybernetics.

Ruiliang Yan is an assistant professor of marketing at Indiana University Northwest, USA. He received his PhD in marketing from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. He has published a book and a number of articles in different refereed journals. He also serves as a Referee for many highly prestigious journals. He specializes in marketing modeling, retailing and supply chain management.