This issue of the International Journal of Information Technology and the Systems Approach (IJITSA) contains four peer-reviewed articles and an interview with Dr. Frank Stowell. Dr. Stowell is a Full Professor of Systems and Information Systems in the School of Computing at the University of Portsmouth in the United Kingdom. He is co-chair of a number of funded research projects, notably the Systems Practice for Managing Complexity project, (http://www.spmc.org.uk/) which was awarded an EPSRC grant for 3 years. This work currently continues as a self sustaining network for managers from industry and academia. He is also past President of the UK Academy of Information Systems and the UK Systems Society, and the current Vice President of that society. He is the current chair of the Council of Information Systems Professors (CISP), and he has also held academic managerial responsibilities as Head of the Department of Computing at two universities in the United Kingdom. Professor Stowell also has a vast experience defining and developing IT supported management information systems. Prior to his academic career, he was a consultant in a central government sponsored Management Systems Development Group. We are pleased and honored by his willingness to share his thoughts with IJITSA’s readers.

In the first article, titled “From Synergy to Symbiosis: New Directions in Security and Privacy?”, Vasilios Katos, Frank Stowell, and Peter Bednar (University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom), investigate the relationship between data collected for security purposes and individual privacy. The authors use cross methodology, adopted from macroeconomics, and ideas from political science. In their analysis, they examine the computerization of society and the effect that increased surveillance has had on individual privacy.

In the second article, titled “Integrated Digital Health Systems Design: A Service-Oriented Soft Systems Methodology”, Wullianallur Raghupathi and Amjad Umar (Fordham University, USA) examine the development of health systems that will support inter-enterprise healthcare delivery. While most prior work in healthcare systems has been conducted within a single organization, this research looks at the healthcare environment more generally which involves multiple organizations. The potential of soft systems methodology used within a service-oriented architecture is considered. A prototype application is described as well as challenges related to the approach.

The third article is titled “Self-Efficacy in Software Developers: A Framework for the Study of the Dynamics of Human Cognitive Empowerment.” It is written by Ruben Mancha, Cory Hallam, and Glenn Dietrich (The University of Texas at San Antonio, USA). These authors apply general systems theory in proposing a theoretical model capable of depicting the cognitive processing of a software
agent. The model contains cognitive-affective, personality, and environmental constructs. The validity of the approach and the managerial benefits derived are discussed.

The final article is titled “OSTRA: A Process Framework for the Transition to Service-Oriented Architecture” and is written by Fabiano Tiba, Shuying Wang, Sunitha Ramanujam and Miriam A.M. Capretz (The University of Western Ontario, Canada). This article develops a variation on the service-oriented architecture (SOA) approach designed to manage the transition to SOA. Their Opportunity-driven Service-oriented Transition (OSTRA) approach is an iterative and incremental process that guides enterprises in the evolution of their current applications to SOA.

As we progress into our second year of publication, we invite researchers and practitioners in information systems, systems engineering, software engineering, or complex systems, and thinkers interested in philosophical concerns that use a systems paradigm to submit research articles to IJITSA. We encourage researchers interested in applying the systems approach in their work to serve as reviewers so that they may become acquainted with the latest efforts in the field. Our editorial review board is focused on building a premier journal useful for strengthening the information systems discipline. We invite you to join us!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As always, we thank the people who have submitted manuscripts for consideration, the reviewers who contribute their time and efforts, the eminent scholars who assist us, and IGI editorial staff for their support in helping us to successfully publish another issue of IJITSA.

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