In 1995, when Nicholas Negroponte, scholar and computer scientist, used the well-known metaphor of shifting from processing atoms to processing bits, the concept of Digital Economy had already been involved in many research works, papers, projects and books. It was then easy to conclude that the Digital Era had already been born, together with all the challenges, opportunities and changes that an electronic-based economy (goods and services), conjured with intangible assets and electronic transactions over passing the Era of exclusive physical resources and 1-to-1 contacts.

Widely accepted, widely discussed, the new approaches of the even newer economy are far from being observed on a theoretical level only. Social, economic, psychological and emotional impacts share the costs and benefits of the new paradigm and the practices it triggered in frameworks where the evanescence of the physical boundaries leads both to increasing possibilities of making profit and to decreasing responsibility given to the human side of things. Both eulogized and contested, the new era of Internet and Web technologies shows how its features hold important changes and dynamic perspectives in everyday living.

This special issue aims to explore a broad part of this vast subject and provides the readers with an opened perspective toward various impacts of using digital tools in order to deal with innovation.

The first article of this special issue draws the attention upon one of the main problems of Economics: “how to get valuable products from limited resources”. The base of the authors’ findings is that super – specialized human resources as a strategic factor and the structure of future organizations should be properly designed in order to get the best results within exploitation. The case study discussed in this article reveals Mintzberg’s perspective toward structure design and explores the electrochemical center of the University of Tehran. The authors explore the advantages of combining flexibility of adhocratic organizations and expertise-oriented credit of bureaucratic professional. Conclusions are emphasizing the development within the knowledge-based economy of the digital age.

The significance of the Internet, its impact upon services suppliers and the way they are managed is discussed in the second article. This article examines the role of the Internet in modeling the relative importance of various stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, distributors, stockholders, managers, and employees within service management environment. The analysis highlights the dynamic role of each stakeholder in any organization context and gets the reader informed about how they influence service management
decisions. Today’s management is challenged with a clear vision of the ever changing business environments and of the manner that the Internet can facilitate facing new challenges.

Nobody can deny the importance of the banking sector for economy, or its positive impact or destructive influence upon economic development. Since the early stages, digital revolution has been affecting many organizational structures at many different levels. The study discussed in the third article argues that standard operating procedures, politics, culture, surrounding environment and management decisions were all affected by the digital revolution in Nigerian banking trade. Moreover, the authors conclude that it was not only an affecter, but it changed the course of history in the banking industry, with wide effects on both the organizational and industrial structures. Thus, it becomes imperative for banks and their management to approach proper restructuring in order to facilitate optimal utilization of the benefits provided by this overwhelming revolution.

The fourth article questions the types of innovation that are predominant in SMEs in developing countries and investigates their impact on various dimensions of performance through a survey carried out in Nigeria in 2007. Although innovation is important for superior enterprise performance, the results suggest that the type of innovation that SMEs pursue is not a critical factor. While there was no difference found in the focus of SMEs on product or process innovations, evidence showed that SMEs tend to underline both. Incremental innovation was found to be very important for Nigerian SMEs and a significant predictor of product quality rather than of the revenue. The article concludes that SMEs choose to pursue those innovations that best fit their strategies and the available resources. Such levels of innovation entitles Nigerian SMEs to better exploit the domestic market, but proves unable to support new product developments required to enter export markets.

Finally, the issues are focused on Digital Divide. The effectiveness of using information technology is analyzed in the fifth study. The approach is based on several indicators able to provide the measure of the (percentage?) contribution of enterprises that had access to internet facilities and software packages. Their contribution is regarded as variance that occurred within profitability, relative market share and innovative strategy. The authors found that the measurable (percentage) contribution of the enterprises that had little or no access to internet and software packages to the organizational success is considerably low.

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