Economic development in the Asia Pacific region is outpacing other regions worldwide. Most countries in the Asia Pacific region have adopted a national policy in which IT has been recognized as one of the core industries to meet economic challenges. Huge investment has been poured into IT industry and a number of newer business opportunities have been available for IT and other related industries. This scenario is in fact, contrast to the downturns of IT industry occurred in recent years in some developed countries such as the USA. In addition, most world-class multi-nation corporations (MNCs) in the developed countries have taken advantage of the outsourcing opportunity to develop their IT/IS projects in the Asia Pacific region. This practice has already created a profound impact onto IT industry development and hence, IS educational programs in the world. As a result, it is very important to study IS/IT issues from the perspective of Asia Pacific, which could complement the understanding of those important organizational and strategic IS issues across geographic borders. Further, it may help MNCs of developed countries to perform better in their business expansions in Asia Pacific region.

This special issue on IT/IS in Asia-Pacific provides a good publication opportunity for IT/IS researchers/scholars worldwide who are interested in IS research issues in the Asia Pacific region. The main purpose of this special issue is to provide a forum where international scholars and practitioners who are interested in IS/IT issues associated with the Asia Pacific region, can share their research and practical experiences to explore new research ideas to advance IS research in the Asia Pacific region. This goal is also matched with the aim of AIS (association for information systems) SIG-ISAP (specific interest group on IT/IS issues in Asia Pacific, http://sigs.aisnet.org/SIGISAP/).

This special issue was initially based upon the proceeding of the AIS SIG_ISAP2005 annual conference held in Las Vegas, USA. To ensure quality of the special issue, a new round of call for articles was launched. The co-editors of the special issue received 36 submissions. These submissions were actually screened by the special issue editors to check the suitability. Eighteen out of 36 passed the screen and advanced into the full review process. Finally, 6 out of 18 were accepted for this special issue (in fact, only four articles were accepted as research articles and two articles were accepted as research notes). This led to a final acceptance rate of 16%. This acceptance was comparable to that of a premier international IS journal. We trust that you will find the articles included in this special issue interesting and informative. Further, articles in this special issue also reflect, to some extent, the
current status and perspectives of IS research in Asia Pacific.

In the first article entitled “Exploring IT Adoption Process in Shanghai Firms: An Empirical Study,” Lili Cui, Cheng Zhang, Chenghong Zhang, and Lihua Huang developed an integrated model to examine factors, particularly government factors, which influence IT adoption in Chinese firms. By analyzing the survey data from 1540 firms across 14 industries and across various ownerships in Shanghai, the study contributed several insights into firms’ IT usage. First of all, this study contributed to IT adoption research by validating the general route from IT infrastructure construction to value realization. Second, the findings suggested that government actions influence firms’ IT infrastructure development and IT management decision in a developing country such as China, which had not been reported and empirically validated in prior published IS research. Additionally, this study also provided valuable IT adoption implications to firms in other developing countries.

Risks evaluation is critical for the success of IT offshore outsourcing that has gained moment in IT industry in recent years. Fuzzy-making (FGDM) has been widely used to evaluate risk in IT industry. However, in conventional FGDM, there exist disadvantages such as the inadequate utilization of historical data, or poor capability to handle potential errors. The second article entitled “A Variable Precision Fuzzy Rough Group Decision-making Model for IT Offshore Outsourcing Risk Evaluation” co-authored by Guodong Cong, Jinlong Zhang, Toa Chen, and Kin-Keung Lai, solved the problem by integrating variable precision fuzzy rough set (VPFRS) and FGDM. It also proposed a new integrated model, variable precision fuzzy rough group decision-making (VPFRGDM), to evaluate the risk in IT offshore outsourcing. This model was verified by a numerical case and can be employed to improve fairness, flexibility, and efficiency of risk evaluation.

A review on group decision support systems (GDSS) indicated that traditional GDSS were not specifically designed to support mission-critical group decision-making tasks that require effective group decision-making to be made within short time. In addition, prior studies in the research literature had not considered group decision preference adjustment as a continuous process and neglected its impact on group decision-making. Consequently, the third article entitled “Mission-critical Group Decision-making: Solving the Problem of Decision Preference Change in Group Decision-making Using Markov Chain Model” co-authored by Huizhang Shen, Jidi Zhao, and Wayne W. Huang, addressed this neglected group decision-making research issue in the literature by proposing a new approach based on Markov chain model. Furthermore, a new group decision weight allocation approach was also suggested. A real case example of New Orleans hurricane Katrina was used to illustrate the usefulness and effectiveness of the proposed approaches. Finally, this article concluded with the discussion on the proposed approaches and presented directions for future research.

The fourth article entitled “An Empirical Study of Factors Affecting RFID’s Adoption in Taiwan” co-authored by Dong-her Shih, Yuh-Wen Chiu, She-I Chang, and David C. Yen, explored the factors affecting Radio frequency identification adoption applications (RFID) in Taiwan. RFID technologies represent a common standard for data storage and retrieval that could improve collaboration and data sharing between non-competing organizations. With the advent of RFID, organizations have the opportunity to rethink how their organization will be. Unlike companies in the United States and Europe where large retailers or government departments mandate the use of RFID, most Taiwan companies are investing in RFID without pressure. By providing insight into these important factors, this article can help further understanding of their role in the adoption and use of RFID.

Electronic business (e-business) has been popularly lauded as representing a “new economy.” As a result, firms are prompted to invest heavily in e-business related activities such as supplier/procurement and online exchanges. Whether the investments have actually paid off for the firms remain largely unknown. The fifth article entitled “Evaluating E-business Leadership and its Links to Firm Performance” authored by Jing Quan, utilized the data on the top 100
e-business leaders compiled by InternetWeek to compare the leaders with their comparable counterparts in terms of profitability and cost in both short-run and long-run. This article found that while the leaders demonstrated superior performance based on most of the profitability measurements, such superiority is not observed when cost measurements were used. Based on the findings, this article offered managerial implications accordingly.

Finally, the last article entitled “A Cross-cultural Comparison of U.S. and Chinese Computer Security Awareness” co-authored by Mark B. Schmidt, Allen C. Johnston, Kirk P. Arnett, Jim Q. Chen, and Suicheng Li, presented a comparison of user awareness levels of rootkits, spyware, and viruses between U.S. and Chinese users. Despite the recent increased attention afforded malware by the popular press, there appears to be a dearth in user awareness and understanding of certain aspects of the security paradigm. The results of a survey of 210 U.S. respondents and 278 Chinese respondents indicated that respondents’ awareness and knowledge of rootkits was well below that of spyware and viruses. Data analysis further revealed that there were significant differences in Chinese and U.S. user perceptions with regard to spyware and computer viruses. However, there is no difference in cross-cultural awareness with regard to rootkits. Due to the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, rootkits and other malware do not yield at transnational borders. An important step to mitigate the threats posed by malware such as rootkits is to raise awareness levels of users worldwide.

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