Preface

In the past decade, organizations of all sizes and types have made significant investment in a new generation of computers known as microcomputers. At the same time, technological advancements of microcomputer technology have allowed many organizations to utilize these modern devices for a variety of computing tasks and information management.

In recent years, many efforts from both academia and industry, have been made to assist microcomputer users in a greater utilization and management of microcomputer technology. Traditionally, much emphasis has been given to hardware and software issues, ignoring a vast number of organizational and managerial issues related to the utilization of this technology in organizations. Many college courses in microcomputer education and numerous microcomputer related publications of the past have clearly demonstrated this overemphasis on physical and functional aspects of microcomputers at the expense of insufficient managerial emphasis.

The primary mission of this Journal is to provide a forum for microcomputer users and managers, information systems professionals, educators, and researchers to explore the vast number of managerial issues related to microcomputer utilization and management in organizations. The Journal will further strive to provide insights into current and future technological trends and issues of the microcomputer technology industry by offering expert assessments of various developments of this technology.

The articles in this premier issue are invitational, and their goal is to provide a framework for the coverage and mission of this journal. These articles discuss a variety of issues related to microcomputer management and applications, and it is hoped that they will become instrumental in inspiring further research and investigation.

The first article, “Microcomputers: Strategic Tools for The 1990s” by Lawrence M. Oliva and Mehdi Khosrowpour, assesses the technological advancements of the past decade and discusses the value of microcomputers as potential strategic tools for cost savings and productivity increases. The article concludes that microcomputer technology can provide the competitive edge to business, if thoroughly understood and effectively managed.

In the second article, “Microcomputer Software Evaluation and Selection Strategies” by Ronald W. Hasty, Anthony F. Herbst, and Mo A. Mahmood, the importance of corporate-wide formal software selection strategies and their impact on the effective use of microcomputers in various managerial functions are considered. The article provides discussions of different criteria for software evaluation and selection. The significant value of this article is that it has been written through the cooperative efforts of two end users and a MIS professional.

The third article, “Microcomputer Education: Are Institutions of Higher Learning Providing Effective Microcomputer Training to Future Business Leaders?” by John Lanasa assesses the current status of microcomputer education in higher education and their shortcomings. The author concludes that the future business managers must be better equipped with a broader understanding of microcomputers and their potentials in a variety of managerial applications.

The fourth article, “Microcomputers and Small Business - A Market Survey” by Sufi M. Nazem and R. Leon Price, discusses the utilization of microcomputers and services provided by vendors in support of microcomputer use by small businesses. The authors discuss the
results of a survey of a group of small businesses in Nebraska and their level of microcomputer utilization. The authors conclude that a substantial proportion of the small firms using microcomputers are critical of services provided by microcomputer vendors.

In addition to these articles, this issue of the Journal also includes a review of LAPTOP microcomputers and their strengths and weaknesses and a review of two software packages called Engineer’s Aide and WingZ.

This issue also contains an interview with a leading microcomputer training expert of a major corporation regarding some of the critical issues surrounding microcomputer training and education in organizations. The book review section offers an assessment of two microcomputer books and their strengths and shortcomings.

We hope that this issue marks a new beginning in the greater utilization and management of microcomputer information systems in organizations. We sincerely value your comments and would appreciate hearing from you.

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Acknowledgement

The idea of starting a new journal is very sweet, but organizing that idea is very frightening, and furthermore, implementing the idea is a nightmare, and it is the during the organization and implementation process where you begin recognizing the value of professional assistance of those individuals who genuinely support the project. This project would not have been accomplished without the support of many colleagues from both academia and industry.

In particular, I would like to thank Robert Graham, Associate Dean of Faculty and Howard Sachs, Associate Dean of Research, both from the Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg for their genuine support and encouragement. Their support is greatly appreciated. I'm also very grateful to Melvin Blumberg, Director of School of Business Administration for his moral and intellectual support. Jan Travers, our managing editor deserves much recognition for her ideas, incredible energy, and total devotion toward this project. I would also like to thank you our copy editor, Ellen Adler for her endless support and contribution. Despite, her heavy schedule, she always find time for our projects.

Finally, I am very thankful to the member of the editorial review board for their excellent work in reviewing manuscripts, and many other colleagues who have written to us in support of this journal.

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Editor