Preface

As articles in previous issues of this journal have indicated, the introduction of the microcomputer into our workplace, whether business or academic, has had a significant impact. From word processing, spreadsheets, graphics, and data bases to desktop publishing, financial modeling, CAD/CAM, and CD-ROM, computer technology has affected almost everyone of us in some way. In this summer issue of *Journal of Microcomputer Systems Management*, we have included three articles which focus on several of the areas changed by the PC. Each of these articles were papers submitted for Information Resources Management Association’s first international conference held in May in Hershey, PA. After the conference each paper was reviewed again and accepted by our editorial review board members.

In the first article, "Managing the Introduction of Information Systems Technology: The Case of Desktop Publishing as an Organization-Wide Resource," Wallace Wood and Robert Behling discuss the need for a corporate policy for the introduction of desktop publishing (DTP) in an organization. Their suggestions focus on the types of standards needed for management of DTP and who should be primarily responsible for those standards.

Karen Nantz in "Supporting End User Application Development with the Information Transformation-Analysis-Management Model" delves into another common scenario in today's computing environment: end-user application development. As computer users have become increasingly sophisticated and capable, software has given many of them the ability to design and develop their own systems with little or no support from the traditional source for application development, the Information Systems Department. After some initial concerns, most companies have accepted this methodology. Nevertheless, from a management point of view, these systems and the associated development process requires scrutiny. Nantz outlines a model for addressing user skills in three distinct areas: (1) information transformation; (2) information analysis and problem-solving, and (3) information management. She suggests the types of training needed by users in each area to help them become better system developers. She concludes by discussing the roles the IS department should fulfill to provide for effective management of this process.

In the third article, "An Empirical Study of Alternative Microcomputer-Based Design Approach to Management Science Instructional Software," Edward Szewczak compares two distinct approaches to management science instructional software and reports the results of using each method with students. In particular, he focuses on ways of dealing with the type IV implementation problem, namely development of a model that solves the problem but is never used in the organization. This type of error is usually attributed to poor communication between the management scientist and the corporation’s managers. The students taking a management science (MS) course face a similar problem in attempting to understand the use of MS tools. In this study, the students favored the approach that gave them insight into the model's workings. In conclusion, the author
suggests ways this same approach might make management acceptance of MS models easier and improve communication between the managers and the MS scientist simultaneously.

R. Scott Huebner, the hardware review editor, is featured not only in his normal role in reviewing the elements of random access memory, but he is also featured in The Expert's Opinion, giving his thoughts and analyses on the trends in microcomputer technology.

Charles Creswell reviews MacPROFF, a software package that allows Macintosh users to access and use PROFS (Professional Office Systems) on an IBM mainframe computer. Not only does this terminal emulation package make such access possible, but it also presents the user with a more typical MAC-like interface providing capabilities more difficult, if not impossible, to access in PROFS.

In our book review section, Stephen Crane from Koch Industries, Inc. discusses the improvements that have been made in system documentation technology in his appraisal of William K. Horton's, Designing and Writing Online Documentation.

As always, we would like to hear your feedback.

Glenn Byerly
Associate Editor