I am excited to have the opportunity to write the Forward to this book, as it provides honest insights into the role of the contemporary CIO in modern business from the personal experiences of the technology leaders who are either currently performing or have performed as chief information officers. This book also explores the role on a global scale through interviews with CIOs based in Taiwan, New Zealand, and the United States. I believe that this book has significant value to a number of groups/stakeholders including those in academia and in industry.

Students of business, both undergraduate and graduate, will gain an advantage from the introduction to the strategic issues of managing IT effectively within an organizational context. Identification of CIO issues and the innovative approach to conducting research into aspects of senior management will fascinate business researchers. The CIO and those pursuing this career path will benefit from the insights and identification of important issues to be considered. The CEO and other C-level executives can profit from the information and better leverage this area that is growing rapidly in its importance as a strategic enabler.

This book combines personal knowledge with academic analysis. The numerous studies and research referenced provide historical and current perspective on the role of the CIO. From the creation of the role in the mid1980s, this book provides an impressive context on how contemporary CIO experiences and views compare and contrast to previous work over time. Those reading this book will benefit from understanding the CIO role and how it has evolved in today’s environment, and how to apply it to their business needs.

In this forward, I would like to add some brief comments about NetJets Inc. and my experiences, which I think contributes further to the aspects discussed in this book. In my role as chief information officer and senior vice president of NetJets Inc., a Berkshire Hathaway
Company, I have seen firsthand how technology, in collaboration with business leaders, can transform processes and enable a degree of optimization beyond business intelligence that cannot be achieved by any other means. We have reached a point where technology and advanced mathematics can be cost effectively directed to provide tremendous returns and competitive advantage. Business leaders that recognize this will quickly outpace their competitors.

NetJets Inc. provides the safest and most secure private aviation solutions in the world. NetJets fractional aircraft ownership allows individuals and companies to buy a share of a private business jet at a fraction of the cost of whole aircraft ownership, and guarantees availability 365 days a year with just a few hours’ notice. The NetJets programs worldwide offer the largest and most diversified fleet in private aviation, which includes 14 of the most popular business jets in the world. With 665 aircraft under management worldwide, NetJets fleet size equals the second largest airline. Access to the NetJets fleet is also available in the form of a short-term lease, sold on an all-inclusive, prepaid basis in 25-hour increments, through an exclusive alliance with Marquis Jet Partners. NetJets Inc. also offers aircraft management, charter management, and on-demand charter services through its subsidiary, Executive Jet Management. NetJets flies to over 140 countries and has operations in United States, Europe, and the Middle East.

I have a passion for continual improvement and have been fortunate to have worked with many talented technologists and business leaders in several industries, including financial services, manufacturing, aviation, hospitality, and technology services. Technology properly applied to any business model is a very powerful driver of top-line and bottom-line performance. Reading this book reemphasized how much of my success is owed to the business executives, those in the business, and the technologists, whose hard work collectively delivered tremendous results.

This book highlights many similarities to those I have seen in regard to culture. I have managed technology delivery in more than 100 countries across six continents, and have a great respect for cultural differences and their impact on effective communications, internally and externally. This book does an excellent job of exploring cultural differences, which I think is a key factor to the success of any business regardless of size or target market, as leveraging skill sets globally can provide advantages in whatever market a business operates.

The role of the chief information officer is very challenging because one must be comfortable with many managerial styles, interpersonal, informational, and decisional. From business knowledge, change management, and interpersonal skills to technologist, all are discussed in this book. The CIO interviews are summarized and compared for common themes and against previous studies, including Mintzberg’s framework of Managerial Roles.

I am pleased to recommend this book to all of the stakeholders I have referenced above. The issues presented are current and important to the evolving role of the CIO. Working with the CIO to effectively adopt and employ IT will continue to grow in its importance and differentiate successful firms. I wish each of you all the very best in this endeavor.

Alan S. Cullop
Chief Information Officer & Senior Vice President
NetJets Inc.