Preface

To keep pace with the rapidly expanding world of global business, it is vital to stay abreast of the latest advances in management and technological strategies for a globalized market. This book of advances in management practices offers just those set of tools to a manager, IT professional, business student, or any member of the global business chain.

Narrowing the field of global business to give the most relevant and helpful practices exposure, “International Enterprises and Global Information Technologies: Advancing Management Practices” offers fifteen chapters in three sections. The authors of these chapters hail from a dozen countries around the world, offering insight in case studies and comparisons of international enterprises.

The first section, “Technology Impact and Use” introduces some of the latest in the information technology, its governance, and the trends in terminology and semantics surrounding these advances. Section one includes three chapters that introduce the book and lay a framework for implementing practices discussed in further chapters.

Chapter one, “Economic Freedom and the Impact of Technology on Productivity,” by Ashok Robin and Thomas Tribunella, introduces the book and gives the foundation for describing how productivity can be affected by newly implemented technology. The authors contribute to this literature by studying the joint effects of technology and economic freedom on economic growth. Using two different time points, 1990 and 2000, and a sample of over 100 countries, the chapter finds that economic freedom enhances the effect of technology on economic growth. In fact, the chapter will explain that the standalone effect of freedom is not as large as its interactive effect with technology.

Chapter two, “The Influence of National and Organizational Cultures on Technology Use: An Exploratory Study Within a Multinational Organizational Setting,” by Zixiu Guo and John D’Ambra, shows how difference in culture and background is affected by technology use in the international workplace. This chapter presents the results of an exploratory study examining the influence of national and organizational cultures on technology use in a multinational organizational (MNO) context. Data were collected from 121 respondents of a multinational organization in the Asia Pacific with headquarters in Australia and three subsidiaries in Asia: Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand. Even though significant differences were found between respondents from headquarters and subsidiaries in terms of perceived media richness and preference for telephone and written documents, very similar media preference patterns for face-to-face and e-mail between the headquarters and subsidiaries were identified.

Chapter three, “Understanding IT Governance: A Case of Two Financial Mutuals,” by Alastair Robb and Michael Parent, gives insight into IT governance by showing the link between effective management of technology within two connected businesses at different sides of the globe. In this chapter, the authors conduct an exploratory collective case study of IT governance (ITG) in two financial mutuals - one in
Australia and one in Canada, using a contextual lens. In one case, the mutual governs its IT through Board participation in a subsidiary. In the second, governance is delegated to management and a Lead Director. Both of these mechanisms appear to minimize ITG risk, and are the result of their respective regulatory environments. This research begins to lend some clarity regarding IT governance choices by firms, and denotes important contextual differences between countries’ regulatory environments. This will allow researchers, managers, and directors to better understand and discriminate between ITG processes and structures.

The second section, “Cases and International Perspectives,” comprises the bulk of the book, containing eight chapters that draw experiences from different sectors of global industry and enterprise.

Chapter four, “User Evaluation of E-Government Systems: A Chinese Cultural Perspective,” by Nan Zhang, Xunhua Guo, Guoqing Chen, and Patrick Y. K. Chau, begins the second section of the book with its first foray into e-government systems and their applications in China, specifically focusing on the impact of cultural practices and how these considerations must be handled. Based on Information Technology adoption theories and considering Chinese cultural characteristics, this chapter proposes a user centric IT/IS evaluation model composed of three determinants, namely: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived fit, for investigating the e-government systems application and management in China. By empirically validating the model with survey data, it is demonstrated the perceived fit has significant impacts on the end users’ evaluation towards e-government systems, due to the special element of Hexie in the Chinese culture. The results also indicate that the reasons for failures in e-government systems application in China largely lie in the lack of fit, which may take root in the long power distance characteristic of the Far Eastern culture.

Chapter five, “Factors Influencing SME Compliance with Government Regulation on Use of IT: The Case of South Africa,” by Michael Kyobe, continues the discussion of government role in international e-business, specifically focusing on the impact of compliance within small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The study within this chapter investigates the factors influencing SME compliance with regulation on use of IT in South Africa. The researcher argues that these consist of a combination of business, industry, economic, technological, sociological, and psychological factors. The results show that cost of compliance was the main influencing factor and that both rural and urban SMEs make limited effort to develop policies and demonstrate compliance. Furthermore, a discriminant function analysis revealed that rural SMEs can be distinguished from their urban counterparts in terms of their disposition towards IT regulation by five factors. Perception of high compliance costs was the key distinguishing factor followed by lack of awareness, lack of training on compliance and security, perception of unfair regulation, and possession of inadequate security controls.

Chapter six, “Knowledge Management Systems Diffusion in Chinese Enterprises: A Multistage Approach Using the Technology-Organization-Environment Framework,” by One-Ki (Daniel) Lee, Mo (Winnie) Wang, Kai H. Lim, and Zeyu (Jerry) Peng, offers an architecture implemented across several Chinese enterprises and the approaches behind its effects on knowledge management. With the recognition of the importance of organizational knowledge management (KM), researchers have paid increasing attention to knowledge management systems (KMS). However, since most prior studies were conducted in the context of Western societies, we know little about KMS diffusion in other regional contexts. Moreover, even with the increasing recognition of the influence of social factors in KM practices, there is a dearth of studies that examine how unique social cultural factors affect KMS diffusion in specific countries. To fill in this gap, this study develops an integrated framework, with special consideration on the influence of social cultures, to understand KMS diffusion in Chinese enterprises. In this frame-
work, the authors examine how specific technological, organizational, and social cultural factors can influence the three-stage KMS diffusion process, that is, initiation, adoption, and routinization. This study provides a holistic view of the KMS diffusion in Chinese enterprises with practical guidance for successful KMS implementation.

Chapter seven, “Factors Affecting Information Communication Technologies Usage and Satisfaction: Perspective from Instant Messaging in Kuwait,” by Kamel Rouibah and Hosni Hamdy, goes to the Middle East, and studies the effects of instant messaging software on communication within global enterprise and the impact on overall ICT effectiveness. Instant messaging (IM) technology has received extensive focus in the West while there is lack of knowledge of it in the Arab world. This study aims to shed light on factors affecting IM usage and user satisfaction in an Arab country (Kuwait). To achieve this objective, this study develops a theoretical model that is based on three well-known models. This model includes curiosity (from the theory of flow), compatibility (from the innovation diffusion theory), perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (from the technology acceptance model), and individual characteristics in the form of prior similar experience. The proposed model was tested using survey data from 609 students, with the results lending support for the proposed model. Importantly, results highlight the impact of social effect on curiosity as a new mediator of technology adoption and satisfaction.

Chapter eight, “The Information Overload Paradox: A Cross-Cultural Research Study,” by Ned Kock, Ana Rosa Del Aguila-Obra, and Antonio Padilla-Meléndez, details research done between two universities in the United States and Spain on the topic of the information overload paradox, giving lessons learned from the study and offering best practices among globally relevant scenarios. Information overload is one of the major problems for individuals and organizations in modern urban environments. This phenomenon has been studied for many years, and has proven to be more complex than researchers believed it to be. It is important to better understand this “pathology of information” for two reasons. First, it has a deleterious impact on work productivity and quality. Second, it has traditionally been a driver of Information Technology developments aimed at helping individuals to better cope with it. The study presented here aims at shedding light on the complexity of information overload, by examining the relationship between perceived information overload intensity and three traditional information overload predictors, as well as one nontraditional predictor. The nontraditional predictor is power distance, or the extent to which less powerful members of a national culture accept that power is distributed unequally. Power distance was manipulated through the collection of data from 184 local managers and professionals (in New Zealand, Spain and the U.S.A.). The data analyses led to one surprising conclusion: perceived information overload intensity seems to be more strongly related to power distance than to the volume of written information or number of information transactions processed by an individual.

Chapter nine, “The Influence of Organizational Communication Openness on the Post-Adoption of Computers: An Empirical Study in Saudi Arabia,” by Said S. Al-Gahtani and Hung-Pin Shih, gives an evidential account of the effective organization of communication technologies when granted openness and acceptance within Saudi enterprise. The study in this chapter adopts social identity theory (SIT) to examine the post-adoption of computers using a research model that extends the theory of planned behavior (TPB) with two organizational cultural factors. Individual attitudes toward using computers and perceived behavioral control are TPB personal factors, while subjective norms can be viewed as the social factor. Empirical findings from 400 Arab end-users show that openness to superior-subordinate relationships (reducing organizational boundaries) significantly influences current computer usage only through personal factors. In contrast, openness to superior-subordinate relationships significantly influences continued use of computers through personal and social factors. However, openness to work
communication (reducing communicative boundaries) does not significantly influence either current computer usage or continued use of computers through TPB beliefs. The implications for research and practice, and the limitations of this study, are discussed accordingly.

Chapter ten, “Chronism Theory, Culture, and System Delay: A Longitudinal Study of Post-Apartheid South Africa,” by Gregory M. Rose, Carina De Villiers, and Detmar W. Straub, returns to the question of culture, this time within the specific setting of South Africa in a postmodern, post-Apartheid society, giving critical commentary and a theory of chronism and system delay. The end of Apartheid in South Africa allowed an opportunity to conduct a longitudinal free simulation experiment that overcomes the critical limitations of this previous research. Subjects were members of historically polychronic and monochronic groups who had been segregated by Apartheid and now live in an integrated society with shared infrastructure and computer access. Results find that members of the historically polychronic group are more accepting of longer delays and are more willing to trade longer delays for improved functionality than are their historically monochronic counterparts. Furthermore, tests find that members of the historically monochronic population that came of age in a desegregated, majority-polychronic culture appear to be polychronic themselves and to differ significantly from the older monochronic generation. Results from this study can be applied to design culturally-sensitive applications for users in the developing economies of the world.

Chapter eleven, “A Cross-National Study of Mobile Internet Services: A Comparison of U.S. and Korean Mobile Internet Users,” by Dong Hee Shin, elucidates a specific comparison between the mobile infrastructures of two of the world’s leading technological countries and their m-Internet users. This study surveyed mobile users in the United States and Korea to determine the key differences between the two countries. Survey questions, developed in two languages, were presented in each country to explore the influences of informativeness, entertainment, interactivity, and availability on mobile user dimensions. The study design methods were based on the revision of a uses and gratifications approach, and a relational model of antecedents and consequences was tested with a structural equation modeling approach. Mobile Internet service uses and gratifications were analyzed cross-nationally in a comparative fashion focusing on the differences in the composition of motives in the two countries. Based on the results of this study, practical implications for marketing strategies in mobile service markets and theoretical implications for cross-country studies are recommended accordingly.

The third section, “Trends and Techniques,” concludes the book with four final chapters on topics such as offshoring, knowledge transfer, IT maturity, and more from research and case studies across the globe.

Chapter twelve, “Flexibility in Offshoring: Paradoxical Concepts of Control, Communication and Facilitation,” by Vanita Yadav, Monica Adya, Varadharajan Sridhar, and Dhruv Nath, introduces the concept of offshoring and the importance of its implementation and management therein. This chapter incorporates the stance of control theory to posit a research model that examines antecedent factors such as requirements change, facilitation by vendor and client site-coordinators, control, and computer-mediated communication. The impact of these factors on success of requirements analysis projects in a ‘flexible’ global setting is tested using two quasi-experiments involving students from Management Development Institute, India and Marquette University, U.S.A. Results indicate that formal modes of control significantly influence project success during requirements analysis. Further, the chapter posits that facilitation by both client and vendor site coordinators positively impacts requirements analysis success.

continues the discussion of offshore practices and focuses on honing economic theories towards the best practices within information systems businesses. As Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) moves offshore and now includes Information Systems (IS) processes, there is a need to consider a combination of the two. This chapter explores the factors that a multinational organisation considered when it "offshored" its IS business processes to lower-cost destinations. It focuses on determining the driving factors and challenges faced during the offshore sourcing project. A single, in-depth interpretive case study approach was used to explore this research topic. The results of this study show that the organisation under investigation was primarily driven to offshore its IS business processes in order to become more competitive in the marketplace. This was assisted by the organisation reducing its operational costs and establishing a global presence in many lower-cost locations offshore. A model was developed, which illustrates the interrelationships that exist between these concepts.

Chapter fourteen, "Managing Knowledge Transfer in Offshore Software Development: The Role of Copresent and ICT-Based Interaction," by Aini Aman and Brian Nicholson, summarily bookends the chapters on offshoring practices with a final, narrowed focus on knowledge transfer within software development industries. The aim of this chapter is to examine the role of copresent interaction and the extent to which this can be supplanted by information and communication technology-based interaction for managing knowledge transfer in distributed settings. The study undertaken in the chapter draws on two case studies of small UK firms sourcing software development from India and Bangladesh. Using Nonaka and Konno’s knowledge creation theory, the role of copresent and ICT-based interactions in managing knowledge transfer is explained. The chapter contributes an extension of the concepts of knowledge creation theory by providing evidence of the role of copresent and ICT-based interaction for knowledge transfer in the context of offshore software development.

Chapter fifteen, "IT Maturity and Strategic Alignment: Moderating Effect of Strategic Organizational Contexts," by Leelien Ken Huang, concludes the book with a general focus on the development of Information Technology within a global enterprise, discussing the importance of strategic alignment on the successful maturity therein. Strategic alignment of IT/business remains one of the top IT management issues. The authors propose, using contingency theory, that the extent to which IT maturity can be evolved to support overall business goals is moderated by strategic organizational contexts. Results suggested that companies could succeed when IT maturity is appropriate for a certain strategic organizational context. This research model was generic for foreign companies’ strategic behaviour, because, based on contingency theory, these companies make dynamic adaptations toward their particular external environment for a competitive strategy. Implications of results are discussed.

It is the sincere hope of the editors of this collection of case studies, research, and best practices that it will serve as an essential reference tool for practitioners of global business. The international perspectives offered here give pointed insight into the latest word on Information Systems and Technology within burgeoning global business.

Felix B. Tan
Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand