The introduction and use of information systems impacts the organization. Information technology is leading to a freer exchange of information within and between organizations. Further, the process of globalization, facilitated by information technology, is also precipitating organizational change. These major factors affecting organizations may be viewed from two perspectives. Internally, organization staff, structures, and processes will, of necessity, change. Externally, changes will result relating to suppliers and customers.

Internally, staff must know the capabilities of information technology and how it may be applied to more effectively perform their role within the organization. While various structures are being adopted, one common aspect relates to establishing a learning environment to facilitate the acquisition and application of intellectual knowledge. Finally, information technology must be employed in a flexible manner in order to respond to inevitable change.

Externally, organizations are establishing strategic partnerships with suppliers. Information technology is being employed to ensure an efficient relationship between each entity’s business processes. Further, organizations must now do more than provide customer satisfaction. It is now incumbent upon organizations to delight their customers to such an extent that customers will remain loyal for quite some
time. Also, as customers realize the possibilities of products and services, they become more sophisticated and demand improved quality, service, and reliability. Information technology enables organizations to respond by learning about customers’ wants and anticipating or rapidly responding to those needs.

Many of these issues are addressed by the chapters included in this volume. The chapters presented here are organized into themes relating to manuscripts that take a global or regional perspective.

**Global Themes**

The two chapters at the beginning of this section report on an international program of research based upon Arab culture and information technology policy. Chapter I, by Straub and Loch, describes the process of developing the program. Chapter II, also by Straub and Loch, discusses the extension of the program and a retrospective analysis of the overall process outlining a global perspective to the research. Chapter III, by Niederman, Kundu, and Salas, presents offshore software development as a global economic phenomenon. Then, Hunter, in Chapter IV presents suggestions for researchers to consider when conducting cross-cultural investigations. In Chapter V, Cyr, Bonanni, Bowes, and Ilsever discuss the aspects of trust, satisfaction, and loyalty in Web site design when different cultures are considered. This section concludes with Chapter VI where Siau and Long analyze factors affecting e-government using social development theories.

**Regional Themes**

The chapters in this section focus on one or a few specific locations within one region. The four chapters at the beginning of this section report on investigations of information technology use by small businesses. In Chapter VII MacGregor and Vrazalic compare the advantages for strategic alliances between small businesses in Sweden and Australia. Beck, Wigand, and Koenig, in Chapter VIII investigate e-commerce develops by small businesses in the manufacturing industry. In Chapter IX, Carmel and Nicholson investigate offshore outsourcing by small businesses. Another discussion of small businesses is included in Chapter X, by Ortiz de Guinea, Kelley, and Hunter, which extends a Singapore-developed information system’s effectiveness model to Canada. In Chapter XI, Chen, Chien, Huang, and Ching compare e-government strategies in China and the United States of America. Ke and Wei, in Chapter XII, investigate the organizational learning process of two companies in
China. In Chapter XIII, Jih, Helms, and Mayo rely on various companies in Taiwan to study how e-commerce is impacted by knowledge management processes. Finally, in Chapter XIV, Yoon and Im base their investigations of customer satisfaction of information technology outsourcing on companies in Korea.