

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Frank Stowell, School of Computing, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK

Welcome to the second edition of the IJSS. This edition is the first of the guest editor editions. In addition to the regular edition of the journal I will invite colleagues from time to time to edit an edition in which they will include papers of particular interest to them and, hopefully, to you the reader. There will also be special editions of the journal that will focus on the application of systems thinking to a particular area of interest such as health or the environment. *Systems* is a meta discipline and our intention is to try to encompass a cross section of views about Systems and show how systems thinking and practice is used across the disciplines. Its ideas are cross-disciplinary arising out of a desire to break down artificial barriers between areas of intellectual study. But in modern times there is a danger that these ideas begin to be claimed by academics as belonging to a particular specialised strand of intellectual thought. It is our hope that by providing a platform for systems thinkers through the IJSS we can engender

discussions across disciplines and lessons learnt from the application of these ideas.

In this edition Christine Welch echoes a similar sentiment pointing out that “...Western scholarship has defined itself in terms of discrete disciplines, and academics have been encouraged to define themselves according to recognized disciplines – ‘I am a physicist’ ‘My subject is economic history’ etc. Now we need to pay greater attention to the ‘in-between’ zone – to interdisciplinary research that focuses on relationships, causes and connections”

In addition to Christine’s selected papers we have, what I hope will become regular features, a book review and “The Last Word”.

I hope that you enjoy this edition.

Frank Stowell
Editor-in-Chief
IJSS