

Preface

Many businesses exist today in a global environment. Whether they are large or small companies, they may have suppliers or customers that reside in a different geographical location. The ability to function in this global environment has been facilitated by the use of information technology.

Large companies may decide to place significant portions of their operations physically close to resources or markets. Thus, a manufacturing process for glass containers could be situated in a remote location in near proximity to sand and natural gas. However, the sales function for this particular product could be located in urban centers with large populations of potential customers. Other corporations may establish operations near to where they may access skilled personnel. This is evident in the establishment of various versions of “silicon valley” locations throughout the world. Whatever the reason, employing information technology facilitates this process of internationalization.

Small businesses are also able to establish a global presence. It is possible, through the creation of a Web site, for small businesses to present their products and services to a global market. Thus, through the Internet, it is possible for potential customers to access information from small wineries in southeast Australia or even western Canada. Many of these sites support the purchase of product and subsequent international delivery.

Through the use of information technology, governments are now better able to provide information and services to citizens. Thus, governments at the national as well as local levels are employing information technology. Even within a country, aspects of intra-national culture must be addressed. Differences may exist between urban and rural residents. There will most certainly be inter-generational differences. Further, the ethnic mix will also contribute to cultural variability.

The ability of business, both large and small, and government, from the national level to the local level, to function in these altered environments has been facilitated by the introduction and use of information technology. In all of these situations, both business and government must be able to function and respond to various stakeholders by adopting the appropriate and necessary cultural perspective. The research projects included in this volume address many of these issues. The chapters presented here are organized into themes relating to manuscripts that take a global or regional perspective.

Global Themes

The chapters in this section report the results of investigations which have adopted a global perspective. In Chapter I, Ein-Dor, Myers, and Raman analyze the production of information technology over a five-year period in Finland, Israel, New Zealand, and Singapore. Karahanna, Evaristo, and Srite, in Chapter II, present a conceptual discussion of cultural variability. In Chapter III, Corbitt, Peszynski, Inthanond, Hill, and Thanasankit explore various ways of framing information system research within the context of national culture. Then Grant and Chau, in Chapter IV, present a generic e-government framework that supports the identification of strategic initiatives. In Chapter V, Gefen, Rose, Warkentin, and Pavlou investigate trust-related perceptions of electronic voting by comparing results of investigation in the United States of America and the Republic of South Africa. Sagi, Carayannis, Dasgupta, and Thomas, in Chapter VI, examine differences in attitude toward e-commerce among different cultural groups. In Chapter VII, Chin conducted an exploratory investigation of the impact in information technology governance structures related to mergers and acquisitions in developing countries. Finally, Edwards and Sridhar, in Chapter VIII, investigate virtual teams based in Canada and India to understand the complexities of determining information system requirements.

Regional Themes

The chapters in this section are the results of research which has concentrated upon one or a few countries in a specific region. In Chapter IX, Doolin, Dillon, and Corner focus on New Zealand and present a research model of consumer risk in online shopping. Vasisht and Gutierrez, in Chapter X, also present the results of an investigation in New Zealand of the revenue streams of Internet content providers. In Chapter XI, Kawalek and Wastall present three UK-based case studies regarding the transformation of local government authorities. Mbarika, Meso, and Musa, in Chapter XII, document the telecommunications capabilities in sub-Saharan countries. In Chapter XIII, Elbeltagi, McBride, and Hardaker analyze senior managers' use of decision support systems in Egyptian local authorities. Chan and Lu, in Chapter XIV, investigate adoption and use of Internet banking in Hong Kong. In Chapter XV, Dologite, Mockler, Bai, and Viszhanyo present a case study of change agent roles played during information system implementation in China. Finally, in Chapter XVI, Tan, Lim, and Pan base their investigation of the aspects of governance in e-government in Singapore.