

Preface

The present scholarly book is a collection of some of the best manuscripts published in the *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing* (JOEUC) during last year. This introduction is mainly a collection of abstracts provided by the authors for their manuscripts. The book is divided into three sections: Section I covers Web-based end user computing tools and technologies. Section II addresses end user computing software and trends. Section III discusses end user characteristics and learning.

Section I consists of four chapters. Chapter I, written by Marcolin, Coviello, and Milley, starts the section by introducing a Web-enabled Interactivity Self-Evaluation tool (WISE). Two case studies are used to illustrate how managers can use WISE to develop a thorough, easily communicated profile of their web-enabled interactivity capabilities upon which competitive positioning assessments can be made. The information generated by the audit process is intended to help businesses enhance their interactive communication with Web site users in a market-oriented manner.

Chapter II of this scholarly volume, penned by Larsen and Sørenbø, examines Internet use among employees. The results indicate that users perceive differences across various types of Internet use, although no clear distinction is found between organizationally relevant use and personal use. The authors' analyses indicate that personal use is considerably lower than organizationally relevant use of the Internet. Personal IT innovativeness was found to be the best predictor of organizationally relevant use of the Internet. Age contributed negatively to the Internet use. Males appear to use the Internet more frequently than females. Educational level had no impact on the Internet use.

In Chapter III, Ma and Liu, uses the technology acceptance model (TAM) to examine the effect of Internet self-efficacy (ISE) on perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and behavioral intention (BI) to accept a technology. The authors used a Web-based medical record system and 86 healthcare

subjects to investigate the direct and indirect effects of ISE on PEOU, PU, and BI. They found that, using hierarchical regressions, ISE explained 48% of the variation in PEOU; ISE and PEOU together explained 50% of the variation in PU; and the ISE, PEOU, and PU explained 80% of the variance in BI

In Chapter IV, Mao and Brown investigate the effectiveness of online task support (the wizard type in particular) relative to instructor-led training. Also, the underlying cognitive process in terms of the development of mental models is explored.

As stated earlier, Section II addresses end user computing software issues and trends. It consists of four chapters: Chapters V, VI, VII, and VIII. In Chapter V, Foroughi, Perkins, and Jessup compare audio conferencing and computer conferencing in a dispersed negotiation setting. The authors claim that this setting is becoming more and more important as businesses are becoming more and more globalized. Using an empirical study of 128 undergraduate information systems students, the authors established that efficiency aspects of audio conferencing are higher than computer conferencing.

In Chapter VI, Truman empirically evaluates impacts of performance-enhancing software features on user performance. The author puts forth and empirically tests a proposition that states that dyadic procedure is associated with higher levels of user performance when compared to monadic procedure. The author finds that dyadic procedure may decrease the accuracy of users' work. Based on these results, the author questioned the utility and desirability of software design features that are intended to improve user performance.

In Chapter VII, Wang contends that the commercial software industry does not provide a standard format of software specifications for a software package for consumers and, therefore, consumers are unable to judge as to whether software specifications meet the target system requirements. The author proposes a model of commercialized business software specifications for consumers. It suggests that software packages need to provide specifications for consumers in four aspects: business operations, user-computer interfaces, user-perceived inputs and outputs, and business rules. Using an example, the author demonstrates the implementation of the model.

In Chapter VIII, Hazari argues that the behavioral aspects related to maintaining enterprise security have received little attention from researchers and practitioners. The author identified seven behavioral variables from a review of the information security literature. The author conducted an empirical study on the aforementioned variables using students enrolled in a graduate business security course. Based on a Q-sort analysis of these subjects in relation to seven variables identified earlier, three distinct group characteristics emerged. Similarities and differences between these groups are investigated and implications of these results are discussed.

As also stated earlier, Section III addresses end user characteristics and learning. It consists of five chapters: Chapters V, VI, VII, and VIII. In Chapter IX, Knight and Peason did not send us any information on the manuscript even after repeated reminders. Nor did they send us the signed copyright form. Mehdi and Jan will not to make a decision on this.

In Chapter X, Kanellis and Brunel uses Global Energy PLC (GE) from the United Kingdom (UK) background to illustrate the vulnerability of information systems in a turbulent environment caused by a series of deregulation of the electricity industry in the UK. The structural changes GE had to go through, because of these deregulations, had a disruptive effect on its enterprise information systems, which were unable to adapt to the new and constantly emerging organizational realities. The authors use GE's experiences to provide for a rich description of the causes of misfit due to contextual change, and establish the ability of a system to flex and adapt to the new environment.

In Chapter XI, Boudreau and Seligman contend that quality of use, instead of the dichotomy of use vs. non-use, is appropriate for understanding the extent to which a complex information technology is being utilized. The authors employed an inductive case study of the implementation of a complex information technology that led to the development of a learning-based model of quality of use. Evidence from the case study along with relationships from the literature are provided to support the model. The model suggests the inclusion of factors relating to training (either formal or informal), learning, and beliefs, their impact on quality of use, and their change over time.

In Chapter XII, Horton and Dewar puts forth the idea of how people can be assisted in learning from practice and how this knowledge can be used in configuring information technology (IT) in organizations. The authors discuss the use of Alexanderian patterns as a means of aiding such learning. The authors then use a longitudinal empirical study that focuses upon practices surrounding IT configuration to derive and discuss three patterns that focus on practices surrounding IT configuration. They also talk about some potential dangers in seeking to codify experience with a patterns approach.

In Chapter XIII, Spitler defines IT fluency first and then contends that it should be an important concern for those who manage workers with jobs that require IT use. The author acknowledges that training is definitely one mechanism to build IT fluency. Using an interpretive case study of junior-level knowledge workers, the author suggests that to use IT in their jobs, these workers relied not only on formal training, but also on on-the-job learning through experimentation; reading books, manuals and on-line help; and social interaction with their peers. Interestingly, the author had identified different types of "master users" who were indispensable for this learning to take place. The author then suggested that managers and researchers interested in training users also devote attention to these other mechanisms for learning, especially the "master user" phenomenon.