# Preface

This book idea originated after talking with my academic colleagues around the world, who I met at numerous IS conferences. There are a number of academics who are interested in the role of culture and its influence on information systems in the areas of development, use, adoption and diffusion. The published work of these researchers is scatted in various publications such as conferences and journals. The idea of this book was to try to collect research in the area of culture and information systems, especially in e-commerce, as a starting point for other researchers who want to pursue or gain a better understanding in this topic. This book brings together 12 chapters about various aspects of culture values and e-commerce in the area of policy management, web interfaces, e-learning, consumer behaviour and technology diffusion.

The first section of this book is focused on Information Technology and E-Commerce policy. There are 4 chapters in this section. In Chapter 1, Corbitt establishes the relationship between globalisation, culture and e-business in the world economic environment. The chapter also investigates what globalisation means in different countries and in different cultures. E-business cannot be viewed as an isolated entity. The role of culture influences managerial styles, human interaction. Attitudes toward e-business are imbued with cultural practice that challenge any sense of uniformity or heterogeneity in the world of e-business.

In Chapter 2, Chieochan, Lindley and Dunn investigate the factors influencing e-commerce adoption in Thai Agricultural Cooperatives. The role of the cooperative's mangers were investigated and the authors found that the managerial role is important as their subordinates perceive them as knowledgeable and leaders in turning e-commerce technologies into success. The value of respect was investigated to support their argument of the role of the manager as a leader. Again, this study also shows the role of government leadership in providing clear policy and incentives about the adoption of information technology in Thailand. Other factors such as the manager's knowledge of IT, information intensity, the competitive environment and the social and cultural context of Thai society are also explored in this chapter.

In Chapter 3, Kong investigates the inhibitors to e-commerce adoption in Singaporean SMEs. He suggests that direction by and incentives given by the Singaporean government are important as SMEs in Singapore prefer clear direction and government assistance in their adoption of e-commerce.

Chapter 4 is a fascinating chapter where Kabalimu, Corbitt and Thanasankit investigate the influence of colonialism and its influence in the Tanzania government, especially in IT implementation. The chapter is concerned with how Tanzania has been socially and economically affects by post-colonialism at the policy level and describes how Tanzanians are reinventing themselves in the post colonialism period. The argument essentially is that progress is retarded somewhat by the influence of post-colonial practices.

The second section of the book focuses on the role of organisational culture and national culture and their influences in e-commerce projects. In the first chapter of this section, Chapter 5, Pan and Flynn investigate e-commerce project abandonment by applying the post-mortem analysis. This chapter argues that knowledge can be gained by understanding project abandonment. One of the new pieces of knowledge learned from this chapter concerns the conflict of organisational cultures between the Japanese and Singaporeans. The cultural conflicts are also caused by the differences in national culture levels between the two countries.

In Chapter 6, Sarkar and Cybulski investigate the organisational conflict in the development of web-enabled information systems. They investigate the cultural conflicts between different stakeholders during application developments. Stakeholders or organisations members participating in a common business process are varied in their computer competency, business knowledge, language and culture. These differences then may cause conflict between them and then impact on the development of web-enabled information system applications.

The last chapter of this section, Chapter 7, introduces the importance of stakeholders in the e-commerce relationship and compares a specific framework in both Singapore and Australia. The study contributes to existing literature in Electronic Commerce by identifying and emphasizing stakeholder relationships in Electronic Commerce, and how they can be used to differentiate B-to-C and B-to-B Electronic Commerce types. Clear understanding of the distinction of the two types of Electronic Commerce may assist organizations to formulate the appropriate business strategies when venturing into the dot com territory. In addition, this study allows strategies for integrating both types of Electronic Commerce (e.g. a retailer which integrates its virtual storefront with its backend Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system) to be developed. Electronic Commerce reduces face-to-face interaction between stakeholders, hence Electronic Com-

merce organizations will need to pay additional attention to stakeholder relationship issues in order to satisfy trading partners and customers better.

The third section focuses on B2C models and culture in e-commerce. In the first chapter of this section (Chapter 8), Peszynski explores the role of Mäori culture and its influences on Mäori shopping behaviour on the Internet, especially the role of trust. Mäori arrived in New Zealand from the Pacific approximately a thousand years ago and now they have become an integrated part in New Zealand society. Mäori tend to trust their immediate family members (*whanau*) and tribal elders (*iwi*), especially for recommendations about products and services. This also includes online shopping and the trustworthiness of websites. The values of *whanau* and *iwi* are part of the Mäori collective society, which then influences their society.

In Chapter 9, Intrapairot and Srivihok investigate the use of e-commerce in Thai SMEs, especially in the tourism industry. They found that lack of technology knowledge and infrastructure prevents Thai SMEs from the adoption of e-commerce. The government directions and incentives are also important factors for SMEs adoption of e-commerce. Online payment systems are also a factor as many Thais do not trust online payments as Thai society is still based on cash and face-to-face negotiation. Therefore, many web sites for e-tourism are mainly brochures rather than the incorporation of online payment and booking.

Chapter 10 continues this theme. Ekasdornkorn, Corbitt and Phalavonk, explore an alternative option for online payments on the Internet in the Thai context. The lack of trust about Internet security and the nature of Thai shoppers' habits have been two major factors in the low up take in online shopping in Thai web sites. They propose a micropayment method as an alternative payment system as that method can be used on the Internet with high security and, most importantly, in keeping anonymity of customers who want to keep their identity anonymous.

The fourth section in this book investigates the factors that influence the acceptance of e-learning in Thai universities. The adoption of e-learning in Thailand is still in a very early stage. This study (Chapter 11) is a very useful study in gaining an understanding of the factors that influence the slow uptake of e-learning in Thai universities. Tetiwat and Huff found that Thai culture and values have significant influences on the adoption of e-learning. A clear guidance from the top executive of the universities and Ministry of University Affairs are important, as Thai universities require clear direction and incentives from the government. The learning style of Thai university students also contributes to the slow up take of e-learning as Thai students have less of a sense of participation as an attitude towards learning. Face-to-face interaction between academics is the preferred method of learning and teaching rather than virtual interaction.

In the last section of the book, the final chapter (Chapter 12) investigates the use and design of Chinese e-commerce. Hsu suggests that e-commerce web sites that want to tap into Chinese lucrative market must be able to handle Chinese languages, as Mandarin is the official language for People Republic of China and Cantonese in Hong Kong. The author also explores the differences of western (America) and eastern (China) cultures in the area of collectivism, religion, colours, symbols and how these elements influence the design of e-commerce web sites.

This book is the first to collaborate and collect high standard scholarly work in the area of e-commerce and the influence of indigenous cultures and values. The book challenges the acceptance and interpretation of e-commerce in different societies. To be able to conduct more effective and efficient business and trade, businesses must utilise the Internet more; businesses are required to understand their trading partners, stakeholders and customers attitudes toward e-commerce and understanding their culture and values. The book does not aim to answer every question about culture and e-commerce but poses more questions for further research in this area.

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