Editorial Preface

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Introduction

I am happy to write an editorial for this issue to conclude the first volume of IJEIS. The first year has been exciting for IJEIS with a positive response from both academics and practitioners. IJEIS has an optimistic future both in terms of attracting quality submissions and in growth. The journal will have several special issues dealing with interesting and relevant topics in enterprise resource planning systems and their implementation issues.

About This Issue

This issue of IJEIS contains five articles dealing with: information process and content standardization for enterprise-wide system planning and development; information issues and counter-measures in developing medium and small technological enterprises in China; empirical evidence from Kuwaiti manufacturing companies on IT adoption and industry type; software architectures for an extensible Web-based survey system; and continuous computing technologies for improving performances of enterprise information systems. An overview of these five papers follows.

When a large conglomerate initiated the planning and development of an enterprise-wide electronic database system to form part of its growing e-business systems infrastructure, the resulting action called for the reengineering of information processes coupled with a push toward data content standardization across entire organization. The objective of the system was to have engineers sift through millions of components offered by various suppliers and component manufacturers, where the end-result was to improve the integration and efficiency of the product development, engineering design, e-sourcing and e-procurement processes. The research paper, Retrofitting Information Processes and Content Standardization in Response to Enterprise-Wide System Planning and Development: Organizational and Socio-Technical Influences as Determining Factors, by Yap presents a qualitative action research study on how different organizational, social, political and technical forces influence the social construction of an enterprise-wide information systems. Understanding the dynamics and power of these
socio-technical forces in shaping the development environment and change process of enterprise systems is the research contribution of this paper.

The 20 year economic reform in China has bred a new group of medium or small sized enterprises whose businesses are largely based on scientific and technological development. After China joined the World Trade Organization, these enterprises have had to seek strategies of information to survive and develop when facing challenges of economic globalization and rapid expansion of information technology. Huang and Cai authored the paper, Developing Medium and Small Technological Enterprises in China: Information Issues and Counter-Measures. In it, they examine the necessity and importance of informatization of these enterprises within the context of China’s national economic system and identify issues crucial to the informatization process. By relating to the useful experience of enterprise informatization in the US, they propose some practical strategies of adopting advanced means and procedures through integration of essential information technology into enterprise management and operations.

Khalil and Mady authored IT Adoption and Industry Type: Some Evidence from Kuwaiti manufacturing Companies. They discuss the influence of industry type on IT adoption and its barriers in the Kuwaiti manufacturing companies operating in two different industries: food and refractors. With the exception of database, e-mail, finance and accounting, and inventory control, the findings suggest a low level of IT adoption in support of internal and external information sharing and in support of the operations function in the investigated companies. Surprisingly, many of the proposed barriers to IT adoption were not perceived as “real” barriers.

Many businesses obtain feedback through surveying customers and business partners. With the advent of the Internet, many of the surveys are now conducted on the Web. The paper, Software Architectures for an Extensible Web-based Survey System, by Chalasani and Baldwin, describes software architecture for a Web-based survey system. The architecture for the survey system is based on a three-tier system that is comprised of a Web server, Web application server and database server. The Web application server hosts the application modules that display and process the surveys. The application software consists of packages for establishing connections to the database and for reading static and dynamic data from the database. The processed surveys are written to the database with the survey responses. This system allows for anonymous survey responses and maintains user confidentiality. At the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, they have implemented this Web-based survey system and it was subsequently used to conduct three different surveys. This survey system is easily extensible to new surveys and is used for instructional purposes to teach server-side programming to MIS students.

Business computing has evolved into an organizational engine that drives business and provides a powerful source for competitive advantage. To achieve higher levels of competitiveness, business has to be continuous from data availability perspective and agile with regard to data access. Simply put, system and application downtime are not an option in modern business since each hour, even minute of downtime may generate negative financial effects. An enterprise information system can be qualified as “high-quality” in terms of its architecture, application platform and information it can provide to users but if that information is unavailable when it is needed by customer, manager or any other end-user, the value of that EIS simply becomes “zeroed” from end-users’ point of view. The paper, Continuous Computing Technologies for Improving Performances of Enterprise Information Systems, by
Bajgoric, presents a framework for implementation of continuous computing technologies for improving performances of enterprise information systems from business continuity perspective. It identifies high system availability and agile data access as two critical attributes (measures of performances) in evaluating performances of enterprise information systems. In addition, it proposes a set of IT-drivers for enhancing the performances of enterprise information systems from business continuity and business agility perspectives.

**Conclusion**

The Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editors, and the Editorial Board members invite potential authors and guest editors to forward their papers and special issue proposals in the areas of ERP systems for consideration. For more information, please visit our Web page at www.idea-group.com/ijeis.

I would like to thank Dr. Medhi Khosrow-Pour, Jan Travers and Jennifer Neidig of Idea Group Inc. for their continued and outstanding professional support to the journal in enabling us to march into the second year of IJEIS.

Angappa Gunasekaran is a professor of operations management in the Charlton College of Business at the University of Massachusetts (North Dartmouth, USA). Previously, he has held academic positions in Canada, India, Finland, Australia and Great Britain. He has a BE and ME from the University of Madras and a PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology. He teaches and conducts research in operations management and information systems. He serves on the editorial board of 20 journals and edits a journal. He has published approximately 175 journal articles, 60 articles in conference proceedings and 2 edited books. In addition, he has organized several conferences in the emerging areas of operations management and information systems. He has extensive editorial experience that includes the guest editor of many high profile journals. He has received outstanding paper and excellence in teaching awards. His current areas of research include supply chain management, enterprise resource planning, e-commerce, and benchmarking.