

## Editor's Comment

At the risk of being accused of being subject to Parkinson's Law in my desire to use previously underutilized journal page space, I want to begin my tenure as Senior Editor by announcing my intention to convert this page into one that will serve as a communications vehicle for the MIS field. In some issues, as in this one, I shall write an "Editor's Comment" that deals with topics that are relevant to the journal or to the particular issue. In other issues, I shall use it as an "Issues and Opinions" forum in which various individuals may present ideas that they believe to be important to the MIS field.

In this initial "Editor's Comment," I would like to deal with a variety of topics. First, I want to make the traditional expression of appreciation of an incoming editor for the job done by his predecessor. In this case, this salute is of much greater significance than usual, because I know of few instances in which a previous editor has made such an enormous contribution.

To put it mildly, Gary Dickson is a hard act to follow! He is the founding editor of the *MIS Quarterly* and is importantly responsible for its success. The degree of success has been little short of amazing. The *MIS Quarterly* has achieved something for which many older and better-known journals are still striving — acceptance and credibility in *both* the academic and practitioner communities. There are probably equally prestigious academic journals in business-related fields, and there are probably equally widely-accepted practitioner's journals, but there are few, if any, that have achieved the *MIS Quarterly's* success simultaneously with *both* audiences.

To build a journal from an idea into reality, and then to a level of success with *either* an academic or practitioner audience is a great achievement for any founding editor. To achieve success with dual audiences is many times more difficult, as the editors of many prestigious journals will relate to you in their more candid moments.

So, when I make the traditional gesture of appreciation on behalf of those of us in the MIS field to the former Senior Editor, I do so on a very substantive basis and in a heartfelt fashion. Gary's work and performance have benefited all of us greatly, and it is not without some trepidation that I step into shoes that seem disproportionately large for feet that I have heretofore considered to be adequate to virtually any task.

The second point that I would like to make has to do with the nature of the role of Senior Editor of the *MIS Quarterly* as I see it. Clearly, my objective will be to maintain and to improve on both the quality and the credibility of the journal. *But, I perceive that to be a means rather than the end.* Gary's accomplishments with the *MIS Quarterly* mean that I, as his successor, have the luxury of devoting myself to some objectives that transcend the journal. My second point, therefore, is a statement of purpose and a delineation of some specific objectives.

I want to dedicate myself and my tenure in this position to embarking on, and achieving, some positive changes for the field and the profession. I shall commit myself (and in doing so, *warn MIS Quarterly* readers) that I intend to be an activist editor. I intend to attempt to identify problems and issues in MIS that readers of this journal and others can solve or influence. Moreover, I intend to go beyond the role of writing about these issues to try to positively influence them. Since I have little ability to exert such influence directly, I shall be seeking help and trying to influence others to awareness or action.

To that end, I have already taken some initiatives. I have recommended to officials of the National Science Foundation that a number of members of the *MIS Quarterly* editorial staff be added to their review panels for management science research proposals. And, I have been told that some actions have already been taken in response. I made that recommendation after realizing that I was one of the few MIS people who was serving in that capacity, and that a great

many proposals being made to NSF are, and are likely to continue to be, information systems oriented.

I have also written a letter to the deans of business schools to inform them of my perceptions of the significant problems that exist with tenure, promotion, and salary reviews processes as they are applied to many MIS academics. I believe that faculty in the MIS field — because of their “applications” orientation and their relative paucity of publications in traditional academic journals — are sometimes being treated unfairly in these review processes, and I have urged the deans to consider this, to discuss it with their faculty, and to work with us in the field to improve the situation. Some *MIS Quarterly* readers will also have received a letter that I have sent to many MIS academics and practitioners on this topic as well.

A number of other initiatives are also underway, including the establishment of close ties with the Society for Information Management and its members. Since the journal is published at the University of Minnesota, its ties with MISRC have been, and will remain, strong. So, I want to emphasize the significance of the *MIS Quarterly* — SIM linkage. I hope that this relationship is a symbiotic one and that the journal and the Society will continue to improve the established ties and to create new ones. I see the dual audience of the journal as being one of its greatest assets, and as the second academic person to be Senior Editor, I want to formally recognize the importance of *both* research and applications to the field, and to the *MIS Quarterly*.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome Robert Zmud and Gerald Hoffman to the masthead in the capacity of Associate Editor for the Theory and Research and Application sections respectively. Both are extremely well qualified and I am proud that they have accepted my invitation to work with our other fine editors.

As to the preview of this issue I would like to emphasize that we will be attempting to ensure that both Application and Theory and Research papers are written, selected, and edited in a fashion that will maximize their potential to be appreciated by those whose major interests may be in the “other” category. In this issue, I believe that those who are primarily interested in applications rather than methodology will find the premises and results of each of the three Theory and Research papers to be of great interest. (Some may wish to read only those parts of the Theory and Research papers, and we will strive to edit papers in a way that facilitates such a reading strategy.)

Weiss' Theory and Research article deals with a topic of great concern to us all — stress and strain among MIS managers. Her seven principal findings and their implications should be perused by every reader.

Watson and Driver's article presents the results of an experiment with computer graphics that challenge both intuition and some prior research results, (while being consistent with some others). While not definitive, their summary discussion should give pause to anyone who might be prone to design systems based on personal perceptions of what is “best.”

Culnan's research article has the distinction of having been selected from those submitted to the 1982 International Conference on Information Systems for publication here. Her results and their implications should be of interest to those who wish to establish or enhance the organizational use of commercial databases through either direct or “chauffeured” access.

Both of the Application articles thoroughly discuss timely and important IS subsystems. Both subsystems — the data dictionary and the computer based message system (CBMS) — are assessed in terms of their benefits, costs, and potential problems. Thus, Montgomery and Benbasat, in the case of CBMS, and Vanecek, Solomon, and Mannino, in the case of the data dictionary, directly provide very useful guidance to practitioners who may wish to assess the utility of such systems for their organization. As well, both of these articles can serve as rich

sources of ideas for researchers who might wish to study the organizational impact of these systems.

I hope that both academic and practitioner readers of the journal will feel that they continue to be well served by it under my editorship and that they will feel free to make comments and suggestions. I do not pretend to be a repository of knowledge of what is good for the field, but I am willing to listen, to learn, and to add whatever I may have personally to offer to the considerable prestige of the Senior Editorship to try to effect positive change. So, I hope that the readers of the journal will help me.

Please communicate your ideas, suggestions and criticisms to me directly at the Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 (Phone: (412) 624-6680). Please also note that since the *MIS Quarterly's* publication office will remain at the University of Minnesota, all communications regarding business and editorial matters that are not of a policy nature should continue to be sent there.

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