

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Celebrating 40 Years of *MIS Quarterly*: *MISQ's* History and Future Through the Lenses of its Editors-in-Chief

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This year marks *MIS Quarterly's* 40th anniversary. To mark the occasion, I dedicate this editorial to celebrate the contributions of the editors, authors, and reviewers who have charted the rich journey of *MISQ*.

MISQ's Editors-in-Chief (EICs)¹ have crafted visions and executed initiatives that were guided by the opportunities and issues in their tenure. Their visions and initiatives have shaped the progression of the journal in the last four decades. The editorials of all EICs are available at the *MISQ* site.²

To chronicle *MISQ's* journey for this 40th anniversary editorial, I invited all former EICs to briefly share their key initiatives and achievements during their tenure as EIC. Ten of the eleven former EICs have responded to my request. Their responses are in the section, *In Their Own Words: Reflections of Initiatives and Achievements of Former EICs*.

The Launch

MISQ was launched in 1977. Gary Dickson, who was on the faculty at the University of Minnesota at the time, was the founding editor. Announcing the first issue of *MISQ*, he wrote: "With this issue, the **MIS Quarterly** attempts to break new ground in the information systems field. The editorial staff is attempting to provide a journal which is useful for the practitioner and at the same time appeals to those interested in theory and research."³ Commenting on the two groups to be served by the journal, Gary observed: "Recognize that we wanted a journal in which MIS academics could publish while our primary source of funding was a society primarily of information systems professionals. The vast majority of our readers would be practitioners. The task was to define a product that could satisfy both groups."⁴ The journal accordingly had an *Applications* section and a *Theory and Review* section.

Gary served as the editor of *MISQ* until 1982. Launching a journal for the emerging field of IS at the time and shepherding the journal through its formative years required tremendous foresight, ingenuity, dedication, and perseverance. Gary's leadership role in *MISQ's* launch and in its early years of development provided a robust platform for future editors to build on.

¹The chief editor position was initially titled Senior Editor. The editorial board was reorganized in 1994, with the chief editor position retitled to EIC and with multiple Senior Editors. For consistency, I refer to the chief editor as EIC.

²Editorial statements of all EICs can be accessed at misq.org.

³Dickson, G. 1977. "Editorial Preview," *MIS Quarterly* (1:1), p. iii.

⁴Dickson, G. 1982. "The Apology of a Retiring Senior Editor," *MIS Quarterly*, pp. v-viii.

In Their Own Words: Reflections on Initiatives and Achievements of Former EICs

William King, Editor-in-Chief 1983–1985

1. When I became EIC, there was no backlog of accepted papers. I had to laboriously and belatedly construct the first issue by working very closely with the authors of papers that had been reviewed positively, but which required changes. One day, I received a call from Jim Wetherbe, who was then the Publisher, reminding me that *MISQ* was distributed to Society of Information Management (SIM) members, practitioners who expected to receive their issues during the month that appeared on the cover. At that point, I was still one paper short for the first issue.

So, I selected a paper that I was about to send to the author as a “conditional accept” with the condition being a major rewrite/edit. I just sat down and rewrote the paper myself. It took me several days. When the rewrite was done, I sent it to the author for his approval, but since I knew that he’d approve almost anything to get his paper accepted, I simultaneously sent the issue to Minnesota to be processed for publication. (I’ll never reveal which paper that was, so don’t ask!)

I then set about on a major campaign to promote more submissions. I wrote to the Deans of every AACSB business school and many Department Heads telling them about the quality of the editorial board and reviewers, the rigorous review process that we used, the low acceptance rate (about 14% as I recall), etc. These letters generated many responses and inquiries, many of which required follow-up. As requested, I wrote many letters to promotion and tenure committees for faculty who had published in *MISQ* because the people on these committees were often unfamiliar with the journal.

Overall, it was a successful effort; both submissions and subscriptions increased and the acceptance rate decreased (because some people thought that we were desperate, I believe). By the time I was preparing the last issue under my editorship, we had a substantial backlog of accepted papers (about enough for three issues) and I had just been informed that my request for more pages per issue had been approved. This meant that we could begin to publish six papers per issue rather than five.

2. I felt that the journal lacked a mechanism for less-formal communications between readers and the editorial staff, so I proposed that each issue include an editorial. Previously, only a brief synopsis of each paper had appeared “upfront.” After a lot of discussion and negotiation, an “Editor’s Comment” (EC) for each issue was approved. Based on the negotiations, I interpreted this to mean that I could write a substantive editorial and/or use the EC to announce new appointments and other “news” items. This was quickly broadened to include an “Issues and Opinion” (I&O) feature so that persons other than the EIC could be heard without going through a rigorous review process. When substantial responses to an EC or an I&O were received, they too were published without rigorous review under the heading “To the Editor.”
3. I got *MISQ* listed in the Social Science Citation Index and several other similar indices.
4. I got the relevant editors at *Management Science* and the *Communications of the ACM* to agree to exchange lists of submitted papers each month in order to better address the problem of multiple simultaneous submissions.
5. We began to publish announcements of conferences and positions on a paid basis. We also instituted a student subscription rate.

F. Warren McFarlan, Editor-in-Chief 1986–1988

During my time at the *MIS Quarterly*, the major issue I addressed was making the *Quarterly* more accessible to practitioners. At the time I became editor, we had a good flow of both high-quality theory and application papers. We also had a strong group of highly capable reviewers who made the *MIS Quarterly* a real priority. The academics, in short, were satisfied with how the publication had emerged and my first job was not to mess this up and keep this as the primary outlet for high-quality MIS academic work. The publication at that time was cosponsored by the Society of Information Management (SIM). They were not as comfortable with the publication, feeling it did not really relate to the job of a practicing CIO. I dealt with this problem in two ways:

1. I personally prepared a short “Executive Summary” for practitioners of each paper. The summary aimed at helping the practitioner understand what the important managerial takeaways from the paper were. In some of the theory articles, the answer was very little.
2. For the period of my senior editorship I insisted on an appointment to the board of SIM. This allowed me to hear directly complaints and concerns rather than have them filtered to me in some mysterious process.

This approach quelled the anxiety on the practitioner side and allowed me to focus on the quality and number of manuscripts being submitted.

James Emery, Editor-in-Chief 1989–1991

Around 1976 when *MISQ* was founded, a group of visionary managers and academics recognized the need to establish a sound basis for a new field called “management information system” (or some variation of that name). They felt the need for an organized body of knowledge, a set of general principles, and recognized career paths and professional practices. Out of the deliberations came the Society for Management Information Systems⁵ with a focus on practitioners, and *MIS Quarterly* with an emphasis on academic research.

I became senior editor of *MISQ* in 1989. My predecessors had done much to set the tone of the journal. The dual constituencies served—academics and practitioners—were established as an intrinsic characteristic of the journal. It had already achieved an esteemed reputation as a publication vehicle for many academics, with the essential characteristic that an *MISQ* paper had become a trusted credential in assessing the qualifications of an MIS academic. The motivation for a practitioner to spend the considerable time to document and publish his or her work was less compelling than for academics, because the work often did not get much weight in judging the contributions to the practitioner’s employer.

The culture and practices of *MISQ* have evolved over the years. An Editor-in-Chief can play an important role in setting the tone of the journal, primarily through editorials. There were several themes that I consistently espoused:

1. Organizations should aim to achieve an MIS that plays a comprehensive, strategic role in operations and coordination.
2. Success in developing such a system requires active, knowledgeable, and visible support from top management of the organization.
3. The CIO needs a sound understanding of information technology and project management, as well as a broad understanding of the organization’s “business” functions and their interrelationships.
4. As information technology becomes more and more central to an organization’s activities, the CIO of necessity must become a vital player in setting strategic directions.
5. An MIS must develop a global point of view to deal successfully with such issues as differences in language, currency, culture, and laws within different international boundaries.
6. Methodologies and technologies used to develop an MIS must provide an adaptive response to changes in technology, the competitive environment, and changes stemming from organizational learning. This requires a powerful IT infrastructure and competence in software development; it also requires a management culture that encourages rapid adaptation.
7. The MIS should incorporate “intelligence” to make routine decisions without human intervention in processing routine operational transactions.

⁵The Society for Management Information Systems (SMIS) became the Society for Information Management (SIM) in 1982.

MISQ has done a good job, I think, in anticipating these long-term trends and offering viable strategies for exploiting advances in management information systems.

Few organizations today ignore the potential value of IT. The huge successes made by companies with a CEO who relies on and supports IT as an essential part of his or her business strategy—think of Jeff Bezos of Amazon as an exemplar—testify to the validity of the goals of organizers of *MISQ*.

The critical role of the CIO as a strategic contributor is now widely recognized, to the extent that experience with IT is increasingly regarded as a valuable ticket for an executive to advance to a higher level of management. The current clamoring by organizations to employ expertise in artificial intelligence supports the position that an effective MIS must incorporate elements of intelligence to handle transactions, and even contribute to complex and massively data-intensive decision-making. Global cultural diversity is growing as an essential element in dealing with worldwide problems and issues.

Blake Ives, Editor-in-Chief 1992–1994

My first issue as *MISQ* Senior Editor (SE) was in March of 1992. At that time, the Society for Information Management (SIM) was co-owner, along with the University of Minnesota, of *MISQ*. SIM was a major source of funding and every SIM member was given a copy of each issue. However, if *MISQ* was to become a first-tier academic journal, it had to be seen as publishing only top-flight scholarship. Through the first 16 years we had made great progress in reaching that objective. But many of *MISQ*'s papers were of little interest to the SIM membership or often deemed as unreadable.

We quickly did several things to increase our relevance without diminishing our scholarship. Most notable was the inclusion of executive overviews, written by me, for each article and included in the first few pages of the journal.

A losing proposition! We had two audiences—SIM and college promotion and tenure committees; both had very high, if incompatible, expectations. It was the latter audience that it was essential we satisfy.

To bolster *MISQ*'s scholarly stature, Warren McFarlan had in his term as SE initiated a new role, that of Senior Associate Editor for Theory and Research, appointing Izak Benbasat to the position. Jim Emery, in the middle of his term elevated Mike Ginzberg, who had replaced Izak as Senior Associate Editor to SE, a position seemingly comparable to Jim's. When Mike Ginzberg's term ended, Gerry DeSanctis was appointed to the Theory & Research (T&R) SE position.

There were far more T&R papers than Application papers—the latter my responsibility—and the volume of submissions, particularly T&R papers, was continuing to grow. We switched over to emailed submissions and reorganized *MISQ*'s Editorial Board—now rather than two SEs we had four SEs and one EIC, with the EIC being a retitling of the position that I and my predecessor SEs held.

We strove to improve both the quality and timeliness of our reviewing process. Gerry and I established deadlines for resubmissions. We also encouraged our Associate Editors and ourselves to pre-screen, and quickly return, manuscripts that were poor fits, poor quality, or unlikely to survive a full review without substantial change. While this reduced the burden on our reviewer network, our primary objective was to improve the outcomes for our submitters—even if only to more quickly look for another outlet for their work.

Given the growth of the World Wide Web, I created *MISQ*'s first web site. As I stepped down from my EIC role, I took on a new hat as SE for Electronic Publications, responsible for the *MISQ Central*, *MISQ Discovery*, and *MISQ Archivist* and was also involved, along with Reagan Ramsower and folks at the University of Minnesota, in scanning and putting online all the back issues of *MISQ*.

As I held in a relatively short period positions as *MISQ* SE, Chair of the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) Executive Committee, founder of ISWorld Net, and, soon thereafter, President of the Association for Information Systems (AIS), I got involved in trying to collect all those “golden eggs” into one basket. Bill King, the second Senior Editor of *MISQ*, and I

wrote an editorial in *MISQ* in March 1993, with input from other *MISQ* SEs/EICs, calling for the founding of a new professional association. A year later, AIS was born. Bill King was chief change agent and AIS's first President.

My last recollection, and a contribution primarily to myself, was my decision to call up any author whose paper I had accepted for the Application section. After the pain of writing so many rejections, I really enjoyed hearing an author's joy when he or she learned they would be published in our field's best journal!

Robert Zmud, Editor-in-Chief 1995–1998

In the early 1990s, the very best information systems scholarly articles tended to be published in *Management Science* or in related-discipline journals such as the *Academy of Management Journal* or *The Accounting Review*. There is an obvious and rational explanation for this: these other journals induced considerably greater scholarly respect across the business school disciplines than did *MISQ*. The primary reason for the lack of scholarly respect engendered by *MISQ* was the variance that existed in the rigor (theoretical and methodological) of published articles. While many *MISQ* articles were characterized by high-quality scholarship, other articles could be pointed to (e.g., in tenure and promotion discussions) that lacked the rigor expected of a top scholarly journal. Having participated in numerous tenure and promotion decisions (and heard about many others), my primary objective on being appointed EIC was to improve the scholarly respect of *MISQ* both within the information systems discipline and across the other business school disciplines.

Accomplishing this objective required a number of tactics, some external to the *MISQ* family and some internal. Externally, a variety of promotional activities were undertaken to (1) motivate information systems scholars to send their *best* work to *MISQ* and (2) encourage such submissions from *all* areas of information systems research (in the early 1990s, *MISQ* was largely perceived as an outlet for behavioral and management-oriented information systems research). Internally, successful and respected scholars across information systems research areas essentially new to the journal (e.g., economics, design science, etc.) were appointed to the editorial board as Senior and Associate Editors, and an effort (via regularly-held Senior Editor conference calls) was taken to build a shared vision of the *MISQ* review process (and to refine this review process) such that articles lacking strong scholarly rigor were less likely to be published.

These tactics ultimately proved successful. By the end of the 1990s, the information systems discipline had two field-specific journals (*MISQ* and *Information Systems Research*) that were perceived (within the information systems discipline and across other business school disciplines) as publishing articles of high-quality scholarship and as being receptive to submissions from all information systems research areas. In fact, one might say these tactics proved too successful—prompting many across the information systems discipline to decry that information systems scholarly research lacked relevance to practice and prompting Izak Benbasat and myself to craft a 1999 *MISQ* commentary⁶ on achieving a rigor/relevance balance in information systems research.

Allen Lee, Editor-in-Chief 1999–2001

I undertook several major initiatives in my tenure as EIC.

1. **Advancing the acceptance of qualitative research by the IS mainstream.** Helping this effort was the special issue on qualitative and intensive research, for which M. Lynne Markus and I served as co-senior editors. Whereas the proposal for the special issue was approved before I was appointed as EIC, the special issue nonetheless contributed, in a major way, to signaling to the IS field that qualitative research was accepted by the IS mainstream.
2. **Advancing the acceptance of design science by the IS mainstream.** Beginning in 1999, in my invited presentations and keynotes as EIC, I would call for more research involving design science. During my time as EIC, I commissioned a paper that eventually (after my term as EIC) was published in 2004 as “Design Science in Information Systems Research” (by A. R.

⁶Benbasat, I., and Zmud, R. W. 1999. “Empirical Research in Information Systems: The Practice of Relevance,” *MIS Quarterly* (23:1), pp. 3-16.

Hevner, S. T. March, J. Park, and S. Ram, *MIS Quarterly*, (28:1), pp. 75-105). The resulting impact in advancing the acceptance of design science by the IS mainstream is unarguable. Certainly the authors deserve all the credit for this impact.

3. **Advancing the acceptance of relevant and executive research by the IS mainstream.** With the help of Alan Dennis, Cynthia Beath, Jeanne Ross, Michael Vitale, Gordon Davis, and others, *MISQ Executive* was created during my tenure as EIC.
4. **Promoting equality on the editorial board.** During my tenure as EIC, women achieved equal representation on the *MISQ* editorial board. I must confess, however, that my attempt to increase the representation of non-North Americans was hardly as successful.

Ron Weber, Editor-in-Chief 2002–2004

During my tenure as Editor-in Chief, I sought to enact three major initiatives.

First, I sought to effect some changes to the *MIS Quarterly's* review processes so that reviews were (1) more constructive and timely, and (2) placed greater emphasis on innovative contributions rather than rigorous research method (please see my editorial in the March 2002 issue). During March-April 2002, the Senior Editors and I undertook an examination of the review processes used with the objective of shifting the mindset of the editorial board, reviewers, and prospective authors toward achieving these objectives in due course (please see my editorial in the June 2002 issue). Overall, I was hoping to see a larger number of papers published in the journal and more impactful papers published in the journal.

Second, I worked with Gordon Davis (then Publisher of the *MIS Quarterly*) and Blake Ives (then President of the Association for Information Systems), as well as a large number of colleagues associated with the *MIS Quarterly* and Association for Information Systems, to establish an alliance between the *MIS Quarterly* and the Association for Information Systems. The alliance established an arrangement whereby members of the Association for Information Systems could obtain electronic versions of papers published in the *MIS Quarterly* as part of their membership subscription. In my September 2003 editorial, I describe the nature, background, and history of the alliance and the many colleagues whose hard work led to the establishment of the alliance.

Third, in the last two years of my tenure, I tried to write several editorials that I hoped would spark debate on some broader issues within the information systems discipline. For instance, in my December 2003 editorial I wrote about the importance of but difficulties in becoming a reflexive researcher, and in my March 2004 editorial I questioned the validity of some of the rhetoric surrounding the alleged differences between positivism and interpretivism.

Carol Saunders, Editor-in-Chief 2005–2007

In my last editorial in December 2007, I highlighted what I considered to be my main accomplishments as Editor-in-Chief:

I focused on increasing the number of diamond cutters (i.e., developmental reviewers) in our discipline. I continued the trend set by my predecessors to make the editorial board (and consequently the publications) in *MIS Quarterly* more global. Further, I was very pleased that we increased the number of articles published in *MIS Quarterly* through changes in the journal's dimensions and print font, and, in 2006, through the publication of a fifth issue for the first time [and probably the last time].

When I stepped down as EIC, the journal had the highest impact factor (i.e., 5.826) of any journal in the business discipline.

My overarching intent was to make more high-quality papers available to the Information Systems (IS) community. Increasing the physical size of the journal to accommodate more papers was the easy part. Another way to increase accessibility was to provide MP3 files of the published papers as read by their authors. The hard part was gaining acceptance for a broader range of topics and methodologies. Having a more global board meant that there would be editors who would be more likely to accept a wider range of topics and methodologies, including qualitative and design research. The really hard part was getting good papers

through a very critical review process. To accomplish this goal, I started with editorials on good reviewing. To highlight the important role of reviewers in the publication process, I gave reviewers the option of having their names printed with published papers that they had reviewed—a move for which I got a lot of negative feedback, though I could never figure out why since the reviewers could choose to remain anonymous. In order to recognize the important role of Associate Editors (AEs) in the process of refining papers, I instituted an award for the most developmental AEs. Toward the end of my term I realized that the real key to developmental reviewing resided with the Senior Editors (SEs). It is up to the SEs to judiciously work with the review team and to use their expertise and broader view of the discipline to get good (albeit imperfect) papers through the system. I realized at the end of my term that I should have published the acceptance rates of the SEs, at least among the editorial board members, to recognize those who had actively worked to get papers through the system. My last project as EIC was a Delphi study, conducted with Izak Benbasat, that was designed to determine steps that the IS community could take to increase the number of top-quality papers published in its journals. Two Senior Scholar initiatives directly resulted from this effort: the Basket of IS Journals and annual awards for the five best IS papers.

Detmar W. Straub, Editor-in-Chief 2008–2012

During my five year editorship (2008–2012), I addressed three major strategic initiatives. They were:

1. Changing *MISQ* into an IS “Big Tent” Journal
2. Reducing Type II Reviewing Errors
3. Using Ambassadorship to Communicate *MISQ*’s Stature

Let’s discuss each in turn.

1. Changing *MISQ* into an IS “Big Tent” Journal

MISQ has certainly had a long and distinguished history of publishing behavioral research, quantitative and qualitative studies conducted at the individual, group, or organizational levels. My EIC predecessors had worked to expand the reach of the journal by encouraging work by design scientists, IS economics/econometric researchers, etc., but the vast majority of the published articles were still ensconced in the traditional behavioral paradigm.

The *MISQ* Policy Council responded positively to my vision of extending the genres of articles *MISQ* published and I instantiated this change by appointing highly visible scholars from the “missing” paradigms. Multiple appointments were both at the Senior and Associate Editor levels. As a result of such appointments, *MISQ* began to see many more nontraditional articles in the journal. Change was also reflected in special issues, such as one on Business Intelligence. Indeed, another tangible piece of evidence for change was that the 2010 *MISQ* Best Paper was design science work entitled: “Detecting Fake Websites: The Contribution of Statistical Learning Theory” by A. Abbasi, Z. Zhang, D. Zimbra, H. Chen, and J. F. Nunamaker Jr.

2. Dramatically Reducing Type II Reviewing Errors

My second major theme was that *MISQ* as well as other top IS journals were likely rejecting papers and thus missing out on potentially exciting research because of what I called in my June 2008 editorial to be Type II reviewing errors. Type I reviewing errors occur when editors accept a paper that the scholarly community would have rejected as a weak paper. *MISQ* likely did not have a Type I problem since this would have shown up in low citation rates, which ran counter to *MISQ*’s high Journal Impact Factor during the previous 15 years. Type II problems occur when editors reject papers that the community would have welcomed. When a field’s major journals reject good, or horrible dictu, exciting work, it has a devastating impact on the field as a whole. The purpose of journals is to publish good/exciting work, not to belabor the authors for numerous rounds of review and then reject the manuscript. In the worst case, without accepted papers to print, a journal ceases to exist. Evidence that IS was suffering from Type II errors had appeared in two influential empirical studies.⁷

⁷See (1) Dennis, A. R., Valacich, J. S., Fuller, M. A., and Schneider, C. 2006. “Research Standards for Promotion and Tenure in Information Systems,” *MIS Quarterly* (30:1), pp. 1-12; and (2) Kozar, K. A., Larsen, K. R. T., and Straub, D. 2006. “Leveling the Playing Field: A Comparative Analysis of Business School Journal Productivity,” *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* (17:23).

Why was this occurring? In the first decade of the third millennium, there were definite structural barriers in some major journals related to the number of pages they were budgeted to print. This was not an issue at *MISQ* but the challenge was still the same as other journals: maintaining high levels of quality while increasing the quantity of printed articles.

In my June 2008 editorial, I argued that our editors were not sufficiently risk-taking and overvalued the reviews of junior scholars, who tend to overly focus on methodological issues. Both editors and reviewers, I felt, needed to “develop” promising papers much more in order to avoid a Type II problem. This was also conveyed in my June 2008 and June 2009 editorials and at the annual editorial board meetings. When editors can be persuaded that they need to develop the best IS work, they should be more inclined to look for diamonds-in-the-rough and to work more closely with authors.

3. Using Ambassadorship to Communicate *MISQ*'s Stature

Another key strategic goal was to spread the “good word” about *MISQ* as an IS journal destination of choice. When I spoke widely at global venues, Type II errors were mentioned, but the focus was mostly on an upbeat message⁸ of why top journals accepted papers (rather than why they rejected papers); this was also conveyed in my September and December 2009 editorials.

The message was also conveyed worldwide in regions/countries as diverse as Australia, New Zealand, China, Korea, Southeast Asia, Africa, South America, the Middle East, Europe, Scandinavia, and North America.⁹ Naturally, many invitations came from interested universities/colleges/institutes. I was also fortunate to be invited to keynote at conferences, to speak at conference events like doctoral consortia, and to serve on panels at events sponsored by special interest groups. All in a day's work.

Paulo Goes, Editor-in-Chief 2013–2015

In January 2013 I had the great honor to start my tenure as the 11th Editor-in-Chief of *MISQ*. I remember vividly the message I received preceding at the *MISQ* Policy Committee meeting, which took place during ICIS 2012 in Orlando. The Policy Committee members along with the previous EIC were the group who had selected me just a few months before. While they stated very clearly that they felt the journal needed to make strides to be more inclusive of the different research traditions of the IS field, some members of the policy committee relayed to me concerns from the IS community at large about the direction of the journal with a design science/economics of IS person at its helm.

I have always felt that the diversity of MIS research approaches is absolutely our strength as a research discipline. At the same time, I strongly believe that *MISQ* is the face of the IS field. To me, the direction of the journal had to be one that represents the best research in all diverse streams. This was not a revolutionary idea in 2013 because, thankfully, my predecessor, Detmar Straub, started to plant the seeds for more diversity in the journal. My job was to strengthen that “big tent” strategic direction and communicate it more widely.

As EIC, you have a few tools at your disposal to pursue a strategic direction of the journal: editorial board appointments, approval of special issues, editorials, and as the ambassador of the journal, tirelessly communicating the message.

I paid close attention to editorial appointments and was able to bring on more Senior and Associate Editors in the areas of design science, qualitative research, and economics of IS. However, appointing new editors is just half of what is needed. You have to create a culture of openness that permeates the entire IS community. The journal needs healthy numbers of submissions in all areas of IS, and open-minded reviewers. The Associate Editors and Senior Editors have to step up and embrace the culture.

Through my editorials, I focused on promoting the open culture and encouraging interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary approaches. I carefully chose very few special issues during my tenure, and made sure they were opening up and enhancing

⁸Grover, V., Straub, D., and Galluch, P. 2009. “Editor's Comment: Turning the Corner: The Influence of Positive Thinking on the Information Systems Field,” *MIS Quarterly* (32:1), pp. iii-viii.

⁹My travels over the five-year term totaled about a million airline miles.

specific areas of qualitative, design science, and economics of IS research. Innovation, societal issues, and big data analytics are examples of areas in which we welcomed top research contributions from the different sub-streams.

MISQ has always been the premier journal of IS. Its high impact factor and overall prestige is unparalleled. By publishing the best research in all our research streams, by promoting integration and interdisciplinary work, the journal will always be known as the face of the discipline. Moreover, it provides the pathway for general business research to follow.

State of *MISQ*

Thanks to the visionary leadership of the former EICs and to the contributions of senior and associate editors, authors, and reviewers, *MISQ* is in a very strong position and is widely regarded as the face of the IS discipline.

Over the years, my predecessors in the *MISQ* EIC role have taken initiatives to open the journal to diverse perspectives and methods that are employed across the IS scholarly community. Today, *MISQ* is a big tent journal. It is inclusive of work across diverse perspectives and methods, and from anywhere in the world.

With the growth of the IS discipline and with *MISQ*'s positioning as a big tent journal, *MISQ* has been attracting an increasing number of submissions and is now receiving all-time high submissions. Responding to the increasing demand and keeping with its mission to publish the best work, *MISQ* has expanded the number of published articles (see Figure 1).

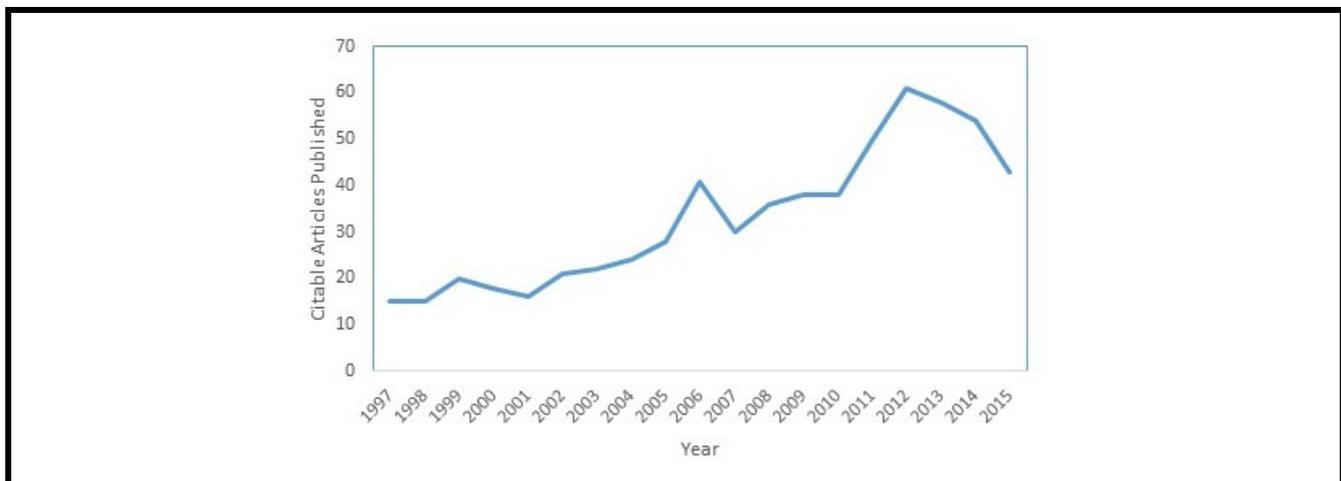


Figure 1. Number of Citable Articles Published in *MISQ* Per Year¹⁰

My predecessors have taken a variety of initiatives to orient the editorial and reviewing culture and processes at *MISQ* with an eye toward not only quality control but also spotting winners and supporting authors in refining their work. The cumulative effect of these initiatives is outstanding. *MISQ* has a stellar scholarly reputation and is routinely ranked as the premier IS journal. It is widely recognized for the impact of the work it publishes (2015 ISI Journal Impact Factor 5.384; Five-year Impact Factor: 9.510), with strong citations (see Figure 2) and with a strong positive trajectory of Journal Impact Factor (see Table 1 and Figure 3).

¹⁰I obtained the data from Thomson Reuters' InCites Journal Citations Report that extracts citation data from the Web of Science Core Collections Indexes. Data were available for the 1997–2015 period.

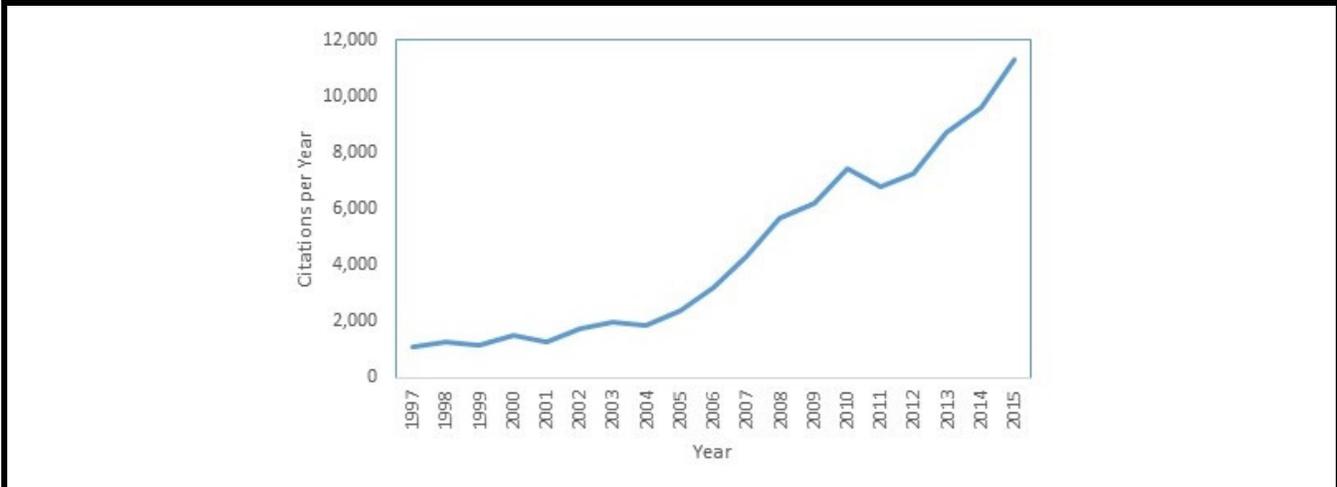


Figure 2. Citations to MISQ Articles Over Time

Table 1. Impact of Articles Published in MISQ

	Citable Articles Published		Citations to Articles		Journal Impact Factor
	Total	Avg.	Total	Avg.	Avg.
2011–2015	266	53.2	43663	8732.60	5.04
2006–2010	183	36.6	26804	5360.80	5.05
2001–2005	111	22.2	9250	1850	3.07
1997–2000*	68	17	5093	1273.25	1.60

*1997–2000 represents a 4-year period; all others span a 5-year timeframe.

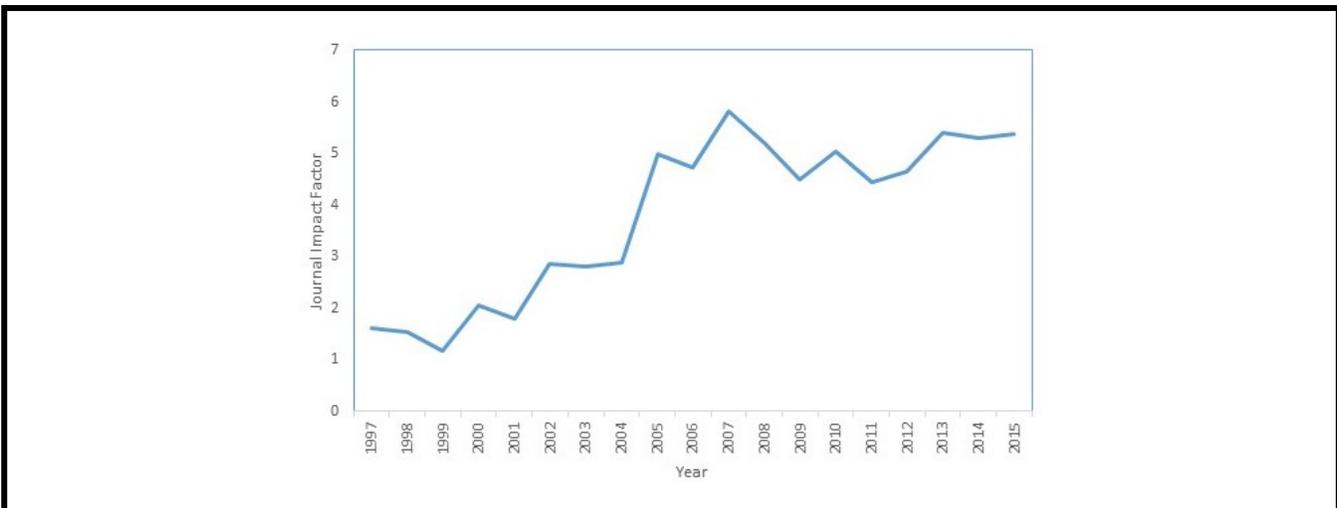


Figure 3. MISQ's Journal Impact Factor

What is further striking is *MISQ*'s strong standing on impact factors across different categories of journals. When ranked on 2015 ISI Five-year Impact Factor, *MISQ* ranks:

- 1st among 88 journals in Information Science and Library Science
- 1st among 146 journals in the IS subcategory of Computer Science
- 1st among 492 journals across subcategories in Computer Science (Artificial Intelligence, Cybernetics, Hardware and Software, Information Systems, Interdisciplinary Applications, Software Engineering, Theory and Methods)
- 5th among 192 journals in Management
- 7th among 584 journals in the Business, Economics, and Management categories

Journeying Forward with the MISQ Trifecta Vision

In my inaugural editorial in March 2016, I shared the *MISQ Trifecta Vision*, which is the vision for the journal that I shared with the *MISQ* Policy Committee that appointed me as EIC. The vision focuses on three complementary elements—impact, range, and speed (Table 2).

Element	Description
Impact	<i>MISQ</i> influences scholarship and practice as the leading source of novel and accreted IS knowledge
Range	<i>MISQ</i> exhibits range in types of published work with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems that are investigated • Perspectives, theories, and methods that are employed • Stakeholders that are influenced
Speed	<i>MISQ</i> executes effective editorial processes in a timely manner

To achieve this vision, I am undertaking the following set of initiatives:

Editorial Process: The core competency of a scholarly journal is its editorial process. To strengthen this competency in line with the trifecta vision, I am focusing on:

- Appointing to the editorial board individuals across research traditions that have outstanding scholarly records and track records of excellence in editorial roles and that can commit to the expectations of the role.
- Promoting editorial practices of (1) expedient and effective pre-screening of articles that starts with the EIC and, as necessary, progresses through Senior and Associate Editors; (2) engagement between Senior and Associate Editors on reviewer selection and on the tailoring of the process for each round of review of an article; and (3) striving to arrive at an editorial disposition on the likelihood of publishability at the end of the second full round of review.
- Fostering a culture of **virtuous reviewing** as outlined in my September 2016 editorial.
- Arriving at editorial decisions in 90 days for 90% of papers.

Special Issues: I plan to selectively launch special issues to promote research in critical problem domains, where IS can have profound scholarly and broader impacts but where our understanding is nascent. Commissioned special issues will have a guest editor team representing a range of perspectives and methods.

In addition, I am focusing on a portfolio of initiatives to broaden the impact of articles, to engage the global IS community with the journal, and to promote dialog and understanding in the community about the vision for *MISQ*'s future.

¹¹This table is adopted from Rai, A. 2016. "Editor's Comments: The *MISQ* Trifecta—Impact, Range, Speed," *MIS Quarterly* (40:1), pp. iii-x.

Research Curations: I initiated the Research Curations initiative to bundle and curate *MISQ* articles on selected topics that are of significant interest to scholars in IS and other disciplines. The curation is a living document that will be updated periodically as new articles on the topic are published in *MISQ*. The idea is for the curation to be a go-to source on the topic. To provide a pluralistic perspective in curating the content, each curation team will have expertise spanning diverse perspectives relevant to the topic.

Earlier this year, I appointed Ashley Bush as Research Curations Editor. Ashley and I have been working closely to identify the topics to curate and guide teams that are developing the curations. We have released two curations: the first on *Securing Digital Assets* was released in May of this year; the second on *Trust* was just released in November. You can access *MISQ*'s Research Curations at <http://misq.org/research-curations>.

Social media: I initiated an initiative that involves the use of social media channels to disseminate information about *MISQ* articles and various initiatives. We are requesting authors of *MISQ* articles to share the insights and implications of their work in formats that are accessible to a broad audience. The videos, infographics, press releases, and media coverage that authors have shared can be accessed through the *MISQ* Facebook Page.

We are tweeting information when we add social media content and share information about *MISQ* activities. As a number of our colleagues in the Far East and in other parts of the world are on WeChat, we are also using this channel. I invite you to Like *MISQ* on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/MISQuarterly>, Follow us on Twitter @MISQuarterly, and Follow our WeChat account at MISQuarterly.

Author and Reviewer Development Workshops: We will be conducting workshops for authors, reviewers, and editors at various venues. A key objective of these workshops is to further develop the *MISQ* ecosystem. We had a very successful Pre-AMCIS Author Development Workshop in August of this year and will be offering a Post-ICIS Reviewer Development Workshop this December.

Ambassadorial Roles: I have been representing *MISQ* through keynotes and editor panels at conferences and workshops and through presentations at universities. During these ambassadorial visits, I have been sharing information about *MISQ*'s trifecta vision and the exciting possibilities for IS researchers to address the big problems and issues that are facing business and society.

A Note on the Publisher and Operations Staff

The Publisher's office and the production and review coordination activities are housed at the University of Minnesota.

A note of thanks to the Executive Editors/Publishers from the University of Minnesota who have entrepreneurially worked to support the growth of the journal and the IS discipline over the years: Jim Wetherbe, Gordon Davis, and, since 2004, Alok Gupta.

Given the growth in submissions and *MISQ*'s leadership in publishing the best work, the publishers have come up with strategies and have generated the resources to print additional articles and pages in an issue. For example, in 2006, the page size increased from 6.5 x 10 to 8.5 x 11; in 2011, the journal increased by over 200 pages. When I discussed the recent backlog of accepted papers with Alok Gupta, he promptly came up with a solution where *MISQ* will print about an additional 300 pages next year, which translates to 3 to 4 additional papers per issue. This type of responsiveness is greatly appreciated as it enables *MISQ* editors to focus on publishing the best work from the community without worrying about production issues.

Jan DeGross, the Managing Editor, has served in her role since 2000 and has worked diligently to ensure that the production of each issue runs smoothly and is on schedule. As of this issue, she has moved 65 issues and 598 papers to production, with an additional 28 in preprint format—accounting for half of all papers in *MISQ* to date!

Jennifer Syverson has served as Submissions Coordinator since 2000 and has done a remarkable job in managing the transition to Manuscript Central and in the day-to-day review operations, handling over 1,600 submissions in the past two years.

MISQ is a nonprofit journal and has always been envisioned as the journal of the field, for the distribution and consumption of high quality research. This goal received a significant boost in 2002 when AIS and *MISQ* joined hands (with significant contributions from Ron Weber and Gordon Davis) to make the journal available to all AIS members electronically. In addition, a new governance model was put in place by having a five-member Policy Committee that has two representatives from University of Minnesota, two from AIS, and the current EIC. This ensures that the journal is in sync with the academic association representing its primary audience.

While the relationship with AIS created significant challenges on the financial side for the operation of the journal because individual subscriptions to the journal plummeted, the publishing office has managed the finances of the journal creatively to keep the journal vibrant and responsive to the needs of the field. An example of that is mentioned above in terms of nearly quadrupling the size of the journal in the last decade. AIS, under the leadership of Jason Thatcher, and *MISQ* have signed an addendum to the original agreement that ensures the financial viability of the journal in the future.

Finally, while it has been traditional that the individual designated as Publisher serves as one of the University of Minnesota's representative on the *MISQ* Policy Committee, Alok Gupta will not represent the University of Minnesota during his tenure as the EIC of *Information Systems Research* starting in January 2017. The University of Minnesota will be appointing an interim representative.

Concluding Remarks

There is much for the IS scholarly community to celebrate with *MISQ*'s 40th anniversary!

Over the last four decades, *MISQ* has co-evolved with the IS discipline and is widely regarded as the face of the IS discipline, thanks to the leadership and vision for the journal by the EICs and the intensive engagement with the journal by the senior and associate editors, the reviewers, and the authors. As the discipline has expanded in its use of diverse perspectives and methods to study IS, *MISQ* has embraced and fostered this diversity. It is now positioned as a big tent journal that publishes work across diverse perspectives and methods. *MISQ*'s strong impact factors reflect that the work it publishes is having a significant influence on the mindshare of scholars in IS and other disciplines.

The journey ahead is exciting! With the rich diversity of perspectives and methods, the community is uniquely positioned to take on big problems and issues confronting business and society, and contribute to our understanding about the role of IS in solving these problems and to our cumulative scholarly knowledge about IS. And, through the initiatives to achieve the trifecta vision, *MISQ* will foster, attract, and publish work that makes such contributions, which will have a significant scholarly impact and a broader impact on business and society.

