

## *Editor's Comments*

### **Introduction to the Special Issue**

This issue is devoted to a single topic, the strategic use of information systems. Publication of such an issue raises a couple of questions: (1) what is the purpose of a special issue; and (2) why choose the specific topic of strategic information systems?

There is some value, I think, in providing a forum for bringing together the best thinking about a topic of widespread interest to the IS field. This allows the special issue editors and authors to explore matters in considerably more breadth than is possible within the confines of our normal procedures, in which each article is submitted and processed independently.

The editorial board of the *Quarterly*—composed of senior and associate editors and *MISQ* staff members—agreed at its meeting last December that an occasional special issue could serve a useful purpose if managed judiciously. The board insisted, quite rightly, that a special issue should maintain the same high standards in the review process as is done for articles submitted by independent authors. The view was also expressed that special issues should be published only infrequently in order not to delay the publication of papers accepted through the normal process.

Special Issue editors Eric Clemons and Sidney Harris have spent over a year bringing this issue to fruition. Six papers were eventually selected from a larger set of candidates. Each paper—including, of course, those of the Special Issue editors—was subjected to a review process fully as demanding as our standard process. The result is a cohesive set of articles from a distinguished group of authors dealing with an important contemporary topic.

For several years now the topic of the strategic use of information systems has generated great interest and considerable controversy. Much of the early work necessarily relied heavily on anecdotes and conjectures. Over the past few years a great deal of scholarship has been devoted to the subject. This special issue affords an opportunity for the editors and authors to provide a comprehensive picture of current thinking about strategic systems. The work has value for both the academic and practitioner communities in their need to better understand the role of information systems and set IS policies.

**James C. Emery**