Editorial

This issue of the *European Journal of Information Systems (EJIS)* is a special one devoted to this year’s European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS 2000). As such, it reflects the growing importance of ECIS both regionally and internationally. It also serves as an interesting snapshot of the quality and breadth of European research into information systems. The papers contained in this issue were selected from the best papers of each conference track, as determined by the track chairs. While there is often a clear distinction between conference papers and journal articles, we have endeavoured to incorporate the papers that we feel are the most interesting and of the highest quality.

ECIS 2000 was held from the 3rd to the 5th of July at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. It was the stated intention of the conference, in this millennium year, to review the progress made in the 1990s and provide indications of likely trends for the first decade of the 21st century. This was the eighth conference in the series and clearly ECIS has gone from strength to strength. More than 400 papers were submitted, of which 187 were accepted. With approximately 800 attendees from 34 countries, including large contingents from Australia and the USA, this was the largest ECIS yet. The venue and facilities were large enough to provide a comfortable setting for the conference and, under the chairmanship of Professor Hans Robert Hansen, the arrangements ran like clockwork. In addition, the food was excellent.

The conference adopted an innovative structure, with an emphasis on industry-oriented tracks. Thus, as well as general tracks on IS challenges, IS development, technology, economics of IS, globalisation and IS policy and strategy, there were separate tracks on IS in the media, banking, insurance, software, retailing, tourism, public administration, health care and higher education. This approach provided an opportunity for researchers in often neglected areas to present their work to a wider audience. Within the discipline of information systems, many of us have an unfortunate tendency to solve general, abstract problems and rarely ‘get our feet wet’ in specific industries.

Turning to the papers included in this special issue, we naturally feature the paper given the accolade of the best paper in the conference, ‘Open source movements as a model for organising’ by Ljungberg. The open source movement is an interesting, somewhat unexpected and anarchic, reaction to the power of the major software companies. This paper provides a timely, objective and well-argued discussion of a phenomenon that may gain in importance or may just fizzle out.

The second-placed paper, ‘Bundling strategy in base-supplemental goods markets: the case of Microsoft’ by Lee is equally timely. It uses economic analysis to examine the strategy of Microsoft as a monopolist. In third place, Kunda and Brooks’s ‘Identifying and classifying processes that support COTS component selection’ uses a case study approach to examine the factors that influence the selection of software components. Their paper is a fine blend of theory and data that tells an effective story in 5000 words.

Research methodology is a constant concern within the discipline of information systems. Carroll and Swatman’s, ‘A methodological framework for building theory in information systems research’ provides a clear framework to assist IS researchers working within the interpretivist paradigm and thus helps to de-mystify this area of research methodology.

The growing importance of interorganizational systems, the Web and e-commerce for both practice and research is reflected in Johnston and Gregor’s ‘A theory of industry-level activity for understanding the adoption of interorganizational systems’. It is often argued that e-government is likely to follow e-commerce after a few years but, before this can take place, more work needs to be done on internal public administration systems. Peristeras and Tarabanis address this problem in ‘Towards an enterprise architecture for public administration using a top-down approach’.

As can be seen, this selection of papers demonstrates the breadth and health of IS study in Europe with topics ranging from interorganizational to internal systems, software design to research methodology, commercial to public administration systems, and open sourcing to monopoly behaviour. Similarly, the approaches taken by researchers are equally diverse, ranging from case studies to economic analysis.

The next ECIS conference, ECIS 2001 will be held in Bled, Slovenia and I, for one, am very much looking forward to it, following the evident success of ECIS 2000 in Vienna.

Steve Smithson