

## **Panel: Curriculum Matters in Information Systems**

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### **Abstract**

*This session will consider a number of interrelated issues which impact on the curriculum in Information Systems (IS). Areas to be explored are the perceived requirements as to the essential content of IS courses, and whether or not these are changing or have changed in recent times, the role and place of emergent fields such as electronic commerce alongside IS and the requirements and needs of post graduate level course offerings in our discipline.*

## **Keywords**

Information Systems, curriculum, electronic commerce, post graduate coursework

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Australian Council of Professors and Heads of Information Systems Schools (ACPHIS) has met three times over the past five years to consider common areas of interest and concern in relation to the teaching and research undertaken by IS academics within Australia. The panellists for this session used the most recent ACPHIS workshop to engage this group of academic leaders of the IS discipline to work on several current and interrelated issues in our field.

## **BACKGROUND**

ACHPIS members were initially surveyed by Associate Professor Andy Koronios to establish if, and how, they were incorporating Electronic Commerce into, or alongside, their course offerings in Information Systems. The survey explored current and planned offerings of both full courses and specialisations within existing offerings at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. At the two-day ACPHIS workshop in late September the preliminary results of this survey were tabled. In addition two focus groups were convened during the workshop.

The first group, chaired by Associate Professor Shirley Gregor, explored the theme "Déjà Vu - How things change yet stay the same", where they considered such matters as

1. What is the core curriculum in IS which needs to be retained?
2. Where is the market going?
3. What trends can we distinguish?
4. How is IS faring compared with CS?
5. What is needed for e-commerce?
6. What views are held on the linkage between curriculum and research?

The second group, chaired by Professor Janice Burn considered PG coursework issues. In particular they investigated the following questions

1. Is the market requirement for Conversion courses (open entry) or Discipline based Masters (IS/IT entry)?
2. Are Full fee paying postgraduate courses viable in the local market (i.e. combined classes of local and onshore international students? (Eg different skill sets, different approaches to learning different experience etc.)
3. Are MBA's with IS/EC options a better way to go?
4. Do Professional doctorates have a place in our market?
5. Is a 3-6 year PhD viable in a world of such change?

This group also shared experiences on Exec Certs. Grad Certs and Grad Dips and specific areas such as ERP

## **THE PANEL SESSION**

The panel session has been convened to provide a report back to, and discussion with, the ACIS community on these three current issues. The findings of the survey and the two focus

groups will be presented to the forum. Opportunity will be provided first for feedback and comment from several senior practitioners in IT who have been invited to join the panel. The session then will be opened up as a general discussion forum for all who are present.

## THE PANELISTS

**Angela Scollary (Chair)** Associate Professor Angela Scollary was Foundation Head of School of Information systems at Victoria University of Technology and held that position for most of the past ten to twelve years – interspersed with terms as Acting Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Business at VU and co-director of the Sunrise Research laboratory at RMIT. She has now escaped back to a career in teaching and research, where her interests include IS curriculum development, User computing, Computer Ethics, Gender differences in IT and Electronic Commerce. She began her working life as a chemistry teacher and moved from there to teacher education, chemistry lecturing, and then into educational and medical research. She formally studied computing to support her research endeavours and used these skills to move to a combined consulting and academic career at RMIT before joining Western Institute, the precursor of Victoria University.

**Janice Burn** Professor Janice Burn is the Foundation Professor in IS and Head of the School of Management Information Systems, Edith Cowan University, Churchlands campus. Prior to this appointment she held academic positions at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Dawson College, Montreal, Canada and Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic, UK. She also spent several years as Director, Information Technology Systems, UK and worked for both Rolls Royce and the National Coal Board. Her research and teaching interests are currently in Virtual Organisations, Strategic Information Systems Planning and Management, Electronic Commerce, Cross-Cultural and Global Information Systems.

**Peter Grant** Peter Grant is currently the Director of Consulting Services (Queensland) in the Gartner Group. His previous position was as corporate Services Manager of Qld Transport. His career spans over twenty years working in IT both as a consultant and an academic. His passion is golf.

**Carmel Gray** Carmel Gray began her career in IT with Trans Australia Airlines (now Qantas) in the 1970's. In the early 1980's, she joined Logica, a UK based software and services provider, as a Senior Consultant. In 1985 she took over the management of the Victorian division and in 1997 was appointed National Manager, Banking and Finance in a company-wide restructure. In 1991, she moved to Head of Operations and in 1992 Managing Director, a post she held for 5 years. In 1997, she took on the role of commercialising the IT operations of the Gas Industry in Victoria prior to sale as part of the privatisation of the industry. She then moved to Queensland in 1999 to join Suncorp Metway as General Manager of IT. Carmel is a past board member of the Australian Information Industry Association and of Logica Australia and New Zealand. She is a past Advisory Board member of the Melbourne University's Graduate School and a current member of CSIRO's Services Sector Advisory Committee.

**Shirley Gregor** Associate Professor Shirley Gregor is Head of the School of Computing and Information Systems at Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, Australia. Her qualifications are B.Sc., GrDipComp, MAppSc, PhD. Dr Gregor spent a number of years in the computing industry in Australia and the United Kingdom before beginning an academic career. Her current research interests include electronic commerce and the theory of interorganisational systems, explanations from intelligent systems, and information systems development. Teaching interests include software engineering, information systems management and e-commerce. Dr Gregor heads the Electronic Commerce Research Group at

Central Queensland University. She has led several large projects in e-commerce related to the beef industry and agribusiness.

**Andy Koronios** Associate Professor Andy Koronios is Head of Department of Information Systems at the University of Southern Queensland. His Qualifications are BEng., DipEd., MLit (Distinction), PhD (UQ). His research interests and activities include Electronic Commerce, Multimedia Development Tools & Environments, Automated Instructional Design, Intelligent Tutoring systems and Computer Security & Privacy. He is currently investigating the implications of the use of Internet Cookies and the evaluation of e-Commerce turnkey solutions. He has published widely in such areas as Instructional Design and multimedia courseware production. He is interested to establish where, and how, the academic community is providing for university level studies in the rapidly developing area of electronic commerce.

**John Puttick** John Puttick is Managing Director and founder of Global Banking & Securities Transactions (GBST), formerly known as Star Systems. Prior to GBST, John was Associate Director with Datec Pty Ltd carrying responsibility for Queensland, the Northern Territory and PNG. John is originally from New Zealand, where he held computing positions with the University of Auckland and Lion Nathan. Dedicated to graduate employment and development, John serves on the Faculty Advisory Committees for the Queensland University of Technology and the University of Queensland. His community interests include Chair of Vision Queensland and Past-president of the Rotary Club of Brisbane. He is host committee Chair for the Rotary International Convention in 2003. John played a key role in a campaign to create public awareness of emergency first-aid procedures. He has also served on the boards of various other community organisations, including the Queensland Branch of the Australian Computer Society.

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