



Foreword

The 11th Australasian Conference on Information Systems is proudly hosted by the Information Systems Management Research Centre, one of the research centres supported by the School of Information Systems within the Faculty of Information Technology at the Queensland University of Technology.

The Australasian Conference on Information Systems (ACIS) is the premier academic Information Systems event in the Australasian region and amongst the top 5 academic IS events worldwide. Its purpose is to provide a high-quality international forum for researchers, practitioners and policy makers to exchange ideas on Information Systems research and practice.

The significant support shown by delegates for ACIS this year, when it is followed immediately by the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS), reinforces and cements its place as the premier Information Systems event in the region. Having ICIS immediately follow ACIS has also resulted in a richer “pool” of conference delegates with many of our international colleagues also choosing to attend the ACIS conference.

The Theme

The theme of ACIS2000, “The IT Skills Crisis: Partnering with Academe,” seeks to focus attention on some of the many ways in which organisations in the public and private sectors can benefit from partnerships with academic institutions. The IT skills shortage in Australia has grown sufficiently acute to warrant the use of the word “crisis”. Unfilled IT positions currently number in the tens of thousands, and are predicted to rise to the hundreds of thousands in future. Unfilled IT positions equate to unexplored IT opportunities and the further loss of competitive position in the international marketplace.

The causes of the crisis are many, and the solutions will not be easy. The falling Australian dollar and the booming e-economies of the US and UK have led many of our best graduates to seek their fortunes overseas. Government investment in IT education has lagged growth in the IT sector and in the use of IT generally. Low salaries and the continuing financial difficulties of the university sector have driven some faculty to leave academia for the private sector. It is little wonder that the demand for IT skills has far outpaced the supply.

Economics tells us that imbalances between demand and supply adjust over the long term, but most organisations cannot afford simply to wait for long-term forces to play out. They must continue to keep up with domestic and international competitors, and must gain the advantages of efficiency and effectiveness that the use of IT can bring. Partnering with academia can help in a variety of ways:

- by working with academic institutions on questions of curriculum design and delivery, private and public sector organisations can increase the fit between their IT needs and the skills of graduates
- by drawing on the abilities and facilities of academic institutions, organisations can improve the skills of their existing IT staff, making staff more efficient and improving staff retention
- by sponsoring student internships and projects, organisations can address their short-term problems at very low cost, as well as expanding students’ educational experience

- by supporting research of IT faculty and postgraduate students, organisations can increase Australia's base of IT knowledge and gain from the use of frameworks and approaches developed to suit Australian conditions
- by participating in executive education programs, organisations can improve their IT management skills, allowing them to take best advantage of their IT resources

The benefits to academic institutions are equally rich and probably better known. The Government encourages partnerships with the public and private sectors through programs such as SPIRT grants and CRCs, but even without funding, partnerships offer the invaluable opportunity to develop and test ideas with informed and experienced collaborators. True partnership is a two-way street, and in order to get maximum benefit academia must be prepared to give as well as to take and to listen as well as to talk.

The papers, presentations, and panels at ACIS will demonstrate the depth and diversity of Australasian research and teaching in IT. This resource can be further improved through partnerships with public and private sector organisations. ACIS 2000 is an ideal opportunity for beginning the partnership process, of which we hope participants will take full advantage.

The Program and Process

Over 180 submissions were received by the program committee, requiring approximately 360 double-blind paper reviews managed by 48 Associate Editors and 221 reviewers. All full papers in the proceedings were blind reviewed; some by three reviewers, most by two. All papers were further, summarily reviewed by the ACIS 2000 central program committee.

The conference proper included: 94 papers, 6 panel discussions and 2 keynote speakers spread across 4 parallel streams which ran over 2 days. Accepted papers originate from 19 countries. A Doctoral Consortium preceded the conference.

Papers in the proceedings cluster around the following topics:

RESEARCH CONTEXTS:

- IT in Developing Countries
- Public Sector IT
- Medical IT
- IT in Small and Medium Enterprises

MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT:

- Benefits Realisation
- IT Strategy
- IT supported Groups/Teams
- IT Security
- IT & End-users
- Systems Development
- Software Engineering

RESEARCH & EDUCATION:

- IT Research Methods
- IT Social Implications
- IT Education
- Ontology for IT
- IT General

TECHNOLOGIES & APPLICATIONS:

- E-commerce
- Knowledge Management
- Enterprise Resource Planning
- Visual Programming

This volume represents a record of the 100 papers and panel briefs accepted for inclusion in the proceedings. Papers are original, have not been presented at other conferences, are previously unpublished, and were not under consideration for presentation or publication elsewhere at the time of submission. The authors retain copyright of papers. Electronic copy of the proceedings is available free of charge following the conference and can be downloaded from the following web-site:

<http://www.fit.qut.edu.au/InfoSys/ism/EWS/index.html>

Thanks

An event such as this cannot occur without significant contributions of time and effort from many people and we warmly thank each of them. Authors, Keynote Speakers and Panelists have contributed their research, scholarship and experience and members of the Program Committee similarly have contributed their time in the refereeing process. In particular thanks are due to all of those members who served on the Organising Committee who, through their efforts, have guaranteed the success of the 11th Australasian Conference on Information systems.

Alan Underwood
Chairman, Organising Committee

Guy G Gable and Mike Vitale
Co-Program Chairs