Editorial

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Analytical studies on the various issues of introducing IT into organisations are essential to improve the effectiveness of this process. Mere introduction of Information Technology does not yield an increase in efficiency or productivity of an organisation. Stories of failures and bad investments are not difficult to find. In "IT planning in India: implications for IT effectiveness", S. Kanungo and M. Chouthoy report on a study among Indian organisations, to analyse how Indian IT organisations are responding to the challenge of IT. Analysis of responses to questionnaires from a number of Indian organisations was carried out to understand how effectively IT is being used, the factors affecting IT use, and the relation between IT planning and attributes of an organisation such as its size, turnover, and mission.

Among the many factors affecting the ease of adoption of technology in an environment, perhaps the factor studied least is the impact of cultural factors. Impact of cultural factors, specifically the mismatch between the culture assumed by the system and the culture of the recipient users, is a significant aspect in the field of software localisation. R.D. Galliers, S. Madon and R. Rashid report a case study of IT introduction into the Karachi Development Authority in Pakistan from the perspective of understanding the effect of cultural factors. The paper reviews the Stages of Growth model for evaluation of IT development in organisations and pinpoints some of its weaknesses. The authors conclude that factors such as the presence of only one individual interested and accountable for the task, the rampant corruption in areas such as land management, and the organisational changes that use of IT would bring about, invalidated the use of the stages of growth model in this case.

Initiatives and strategic plans by National Governments to facilitate growth of Information and Communication Technologies have been the topic of many papers we have carried before. Chia, Lee and Yeo from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, describe the Singapore Goverment initiatives in this direction. The National IT Plan of 1986 has been succeeded by a broader, more ambitious plan named IT2000, meant to transform Singapore into an intelligent island by the coming century. Articles of this nature concerning other countries would be welcome.

Sajda Qureshi, in her paper on GOVERNET, discusses the impact of electronic communications on civil administration in Africa. The issues fostering and hindering the development of electronic network among civil administration staff are discussed. Providing a communication network, in which the key officials involved in administrative reforms in the country can exchange views and experiences, would allow them to consider more options in a greater depth, and thereby improve the governance in general.

The Editorial Team