

FOREWORD

This issue provides a group of interesting articles that cover a wide range of topics of concern to the information management community. As is often the case, they range from general articles that will be of direct interest to everyone in the field, to more focused articles that will be of primary interest to specialists, but which will allow others to keep abreast of work going on outside of their own particular professional area. The editors continue to believe that it is important that different segments of our professional community communicate and share ideas and insights with each other and it is central to the mission of IJCEM to provide a vehicle for this process.

Narciso Cerpa and June Verner's "Practitioner's Views of Software Quality" presents the results of an interesting Australian survey concerning standards of quality, techniques for achieving quality, and the impact of organizational structure on quality. The authors explicitly acknowledge the relevance of the diversity of the information management profession by considering whether members of different specializations have different perspectives on issues of software quality.

Another contributor from Australia, Edward Gould, delves into the relation between human and machine intelligence, a topic of concern that can be traced at least as far back as the pioneering thought experiment of one of the computer's inventor's, Alan Turing, in the early 1950's and one that remains quite controversial in philosophical and psychological circles. This article brings readers up to date on the debate by relating the notion of machine intelligence not only to cognitive psychology but to a lesser known Russian school of activity theory. The author concludes that this lesser known theory may provide the most adequate foundation for further work in the field.

The last two articles in the issue are much more specialized but still should be of considerable interest to many of our readers. S.Y. Liao, Y.P. Shao, and O.M. Wong are concerned with how best to negotiate the transition between relational and object-oriented databases. This topic represents a broad evolution of software design and may be useful not only to database specialists but also as a case study on how to negotiate many of the technological transitions that are endemic to our rapidly developing field.

Li-Yen Shue and Joshua Fan's article also provides a case study, in their case concerning an expert system designed to aid in engineering management, that can be of use to both those working in this area and those working in other areas. Of particular interest to generalists may be the authors' specific concern for the use of these systems in developing economies.



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