FOREWORD

With this issue of the IJCIM we move towards the end of another year. It has been, some might say, a relatively quiet year in the world of technology. Steady advances have certainly been made but it has not been a year of revolutionary impact or dramatic progress. Certainly, the year must feel tame to those who were around and active thirty years ago, when the personal computer was in its initial stages of development, or even ten years ago when the first browsers for the World Wide Web were coming out. We are all, perhaps, anxious to see what the next big thing in IT will be.

That attitude is understandable; we all desire to participate in dramatic developments and momentous times. But at the same time it is also somewhat misguided. Technological revolutions are often meaningless except in the context of the research that implements and move forward the major advances. To ignore such incremental research as ‘ordinary’ is to miss the point that the major advances have practical applications as their major target.

The research projects and analyses reported on in this issue will not in themselves transform the world or our lifes. They will, however, make a difference in our world and lives. By considering one problem, technique, or application that provide an incremental advance which alone with all the other incremental advances do indeed make a difference to how we live in the world.

Among the most recent of the major advances has been the predominance of multimedia content in what had originally been a purely text-based medium. The concept is, however, meaningless unless we can access the multimedia content in an efficient way. In their paper, Md. Mahbubur Rahman, Dentcho N. Batanov, and Susumu Horiguchi address this issue by proposing an architecture for capturing, distributing and displaying multimedia content through existing Internet and Intranet infrastructures. T. Tsang and R. Lai also provide the technical basis for multimedia distribution for methods of identifying different types of content.

Li-Yeh Chuang and Cheng-Hong Yang, on the other hand, concern themselves with the content of multimedia presentations rather than their distribution. In their article they describe a multimedia based module for biotechnology instruction. Computer-based education has been around for a long time, but only with projects such as this one is it beginning to meet its potential.

Automated detection of cancer cells are, of course, of life-and-death importance yet the development of such systems depends on many incremental advances, most of which would mean little or nothing to a patient. Yet an advance like Nor Ashidi Mat Isa analysis of pictorial edge detection techniques as applied to Pap Smear Scans could actually make a life-and-death difference in a medical treatment.
As essential as applications for specific fields are techniques that improve information processing efficiency in a more efficient manner. Md. Rafiqul Islam, S. M. Raquib Uddin, and Chinmoy Roy do just this through their analysis of sorting procedures in a context of unchanging memory size.

As important as making the advances is evaluating them and two of the articles in this issue are concerned with evaluation in the critical area of education. Sow Hup Chan asks tailoring students questions to evaluate what a technology course needs to incorporate to meet the needs of the student. Amirrudin Kamsin, on the other hand, asks the very important question of how commuter-based education stands up to traditional education. He finds that in some instances it can be superior. This is an important result given that those who are being educated will be those responsible for future advances – and the future groundwork of implementing those changes.

Prof. Dr. Srisakdi Charmonman
Editor in Chief