Managing information, resources, rights and people

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One of the nagging thoughts I have when sitting at my computer is how much I manage it, and how much it manages me. My definition of management is based around the concept of getting work done efficiently without doing it all oneself. The articles in this issue of BACIT deal with some of the management issues that confront academics and practitioners of our discipline. With two of the papers from overseas, the international nature of these issues is increasingly obvious.

In the "Views" section of this edition, Douglas White - CEO of the New Zealand Computer Society puts his case for certification. Undoubtedly this debate will rage within NZCS as it has overseas. BACIT is happy to consider suitable correspondence on the issue, as already initiated by Doug's piblication in the latest Newsletter of the NZCS.

The review papers resulting form postgraduate studies at UNITEC give an insight into the research literature surrounding enterprise networks and IT management in New Zealand. Literature reviews have become more important than ever in the current explosion of online information. Together these two papers should help new researchers and practitioners in these fields understand the broad geography of the domain. It is particularly gratifying to see the wide range of research methods in use in New Zealand, this gives the research community a versatile toolkit to tackle problems of different types.

Managing the use of digital media is an important and controversial topic in New Zealand and the rest of the world. The "iPod" generation is continuing to grapple with the difficulty of proceeding fairly in a world where perfect duplication is commonplace. The article by Braja Podder (a postgraduate student at AUT) should help those of us uncertain of the issues, and his proposal could be an interesting basis for a class discussion.

Of course, people invent the artefacts we wish to copy or protect, and some of them are more inventive or radical than others. In their opinion paper, Kevin C. Desouza and Yukika Awazu discuss the issues related to with managing the radical end of the spectrum, people who are likely to be extremely innovative but also potentially disruptive. The problems and concerns addressed will be familiar to anyone who has worked in a creative environment. The authors' call for action emphasises the importance of harnessing the energy of the radical for success.

Working in groups, especially geographically dispersed ones remains a major issue in modern IT practice. In his paper Praveen Sadasivan (an AUT postgraduate student) analyzes the degree to which members of such groups participate and appropriate the group discussion technology. This area of research remains fascinating and the jury is still out on what we can expect group decision support systems to do.

Finally, Ron Zucker discusses a method of getting individual computers to work as a group, using the Jini architecture. I'm sure I'm not the only person who has gazed wistfully at the rows of unused computers in teaching labs, wondering what we could do with them, perhaps this is a way forward.

Congratulations to all the authors, this issue of BACIT again proves that there is a thriving community of research in the applied part of our discipline. Perhaps the most important role of management is to bring out the best in people and BACIT continues to

nurture new researchers successfully.