

## FOREWORD

As Editor-in Chief what strikes me most about the current issue is its international character. Our authors come from Malaysia, Taiwan, the United States, and Thailand. This diversity of authorship is not atypical of the journal and it provides telling evidence about the nature and implications of the information age. In the industrial era access to resources and the background and ability to use those resources were the key to economic success and this led to a two-tiered economic system which seemed to condemn many of the poorer nations to indefinite secondary status. In the information age mental intelligence is the most important commodity and this is a commodity that is much more equally distributed in the world than material resources. This is not to say that the development of a truly egalitarian world system will be an easy task - the need to establish a strong informational infrastructure and educational system remains a challenge in much of the developing world - but the basis for universal development is certainly present.

The importance of digital technology for our political life is especially emphasized in this issue in the article on e-government by Zhiyuan Fang. As Dr. Fang emphasizes, governmental as well as commercial life is being inevitably transformed by the new communications and data processing technologies and these will inevitably result in a new world. Part of that new world is, of course, the internet and the design of excellent web sites is critical for governments and other organizations in the new world. In an article by J. Drew Procaccino, Marvin E. Darter, Gloria Wai-Min Tang, and Il-Yeol Song, the modeling of a website is investigated using a university website as an example. The web has little transformational power if people, businesses, and organizations do not have fast connections with one another. Apiruck Preechayasomboon and Settapong Malisuwan provide some important technical considerations concerning ATM over ADSL connections that can help bring about a truly connected world.

The new economy will not, of course, entirely supplant the old one but it will, particularly through robotics, transform that economy. Robotics is most approached in this issue by an article by Chih-Hung Tsai, Shiaw-Wen Tien, Yi-Chan Chung, and Yu-Tang Lin, which is concerned directly with machine vision and motion. Less direct, but still quite important, are overall control systems that plan and schedule and control industrial processes. In their article, Zalinda Othman, Khairanum Subari, and Norhashimah Morad discuss the application of fuzzy logic and genetic algorithms to these tasks.

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