More room for information development

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As we mentioned in the Editorial to the previous issue, in 2013 the number of pages per volume of Information Development will be increased by 20 percent, so that this issue contains 96 pages instead of the former average of 80 pages per issue. To make even more space available for the increasing numbers of papers being submitted and approved for publication, it has also been decided to discontinue the “news section,” since so much news is now available on the Web, and in a much more timely fashion.

The six papers in this issue cover a wide variety of topics and take us around the world. In the first paper, ‘Exploring the potential of electronic commerce tools in South African SME tourism service providers’, Blessing Mbatha, a lecturer in the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa, reports on a study of the diffusion and adoption of electronic commerce tools by small and medium enterprise (SME) tourism service providers in Pretoria, the capital of South Africa. The results demonstrated that a variety of e-commerce tools have been adopted in these SMEs and are very effective in reaching new customers, increasing sales and improving marketing. Nevertheless, SMEs need to ensure that they offer their staff adequate varieties and levels of ICT competence in order to achieve effective results.

The second paper offers a complete change of topic and location. In their paper, ‘What inhibits authors to self-archive in Open Access repositories? A Malaysian case’, Feria Wirba Singeh, A. Abrizah and Noor Harun Abdul Karim of the University of Malaya report on a survey carried out on academics in five Malaysian research-intensive universities, investigating their readiness to self archive in Open Access institutional repositories. The study revealed that the majority of academics in the study had little or no knowledge of, or experience with, institutional repositories and were unfamiliar with self-archiving opportunities. While most of them endorsed the principle of Open Access and were willing to contribute to an institutional repository under certain circumstances, they felt self-archiving was time consuming and that the major barrier to self-archiving is plagiarism. There is a clear need to create more awareness and to educate authors on the importance of self archiving.

The next paper takes a broader view of information development activities. In ‘Towards a theoretical framework on ethical practice in ICT4D programmes’, Hafeni LWT Mthoko and Caroline PadéKhene of Rhodes University in South Africa conduct a theoretical exploration of the key aspects of ethics that should be applied to ICT projects in rural communities. They explore four existing frameworks on ethical practice, which then serve as a foundation for a theoretical framework of ethical practice in ICT4D. The proposed framework highlights four ethical themes that should be considered in rural ICT4D initiatives: collaboration and participation, socio-economic context, cost and benefits and underlying stakeholder interests. They suggested that further research and practical application could inform the framework.

The next paper provides yet another change of topic – to business information – and location – Brazil. The paper, ‘Classification of business clusters based on information transfer events’ by José Osvaldo De Sordi and Reed Elliot Nelson, of Nove de Julho University, and Manuel Meireles of Campo Limpo Paulista Faculty, examines the utility of the attributes associated with information transfer events for classifying business clusters and understanding their workings. A field survey of diverse actors in six business clusters in Brazil found that differences in the degree of productive complementarity on the part of central actors of business clusters were associated with variance in perceptions of information transfer events that took place in localities. This is believed to be the first research which analyzes and classifies business clusters based on dimensions of information transfer which are relevant to the practice of knowledge management.
The last two papers in this issue are both from China. The first returns us to the theme of electronic commerce. In ‘The digital divide in individual e-commerce utilization in China: Results from a national survey’, Shizhan Zhu of Guangdong University of Technology and Juan Chen of Hong Kong Polytechnic University investigate the socio-demographic determinants of the first-order digital divide (access to the Internet) and the second-order digital divide (e-commerce use) in China. The results demonstrate the significant effects of rural-urban inequality and socio-economic divisions in Internet access while age, gender, education, and residency were identified as significant predictors for individual e-commerce use. The authors hope is that their research can be used in designing effective policies to reduce China’s digital inequality.

In the final paper in this issue, ‘Understanding preprint sharing on Sciencepaper Online from the perspectives of motivation and trust’, Xianjin Zha and Jing Li from Wuhan University and Yalan Yan from Wuhan University of Science and Technology report on an online survey of authors who had contributed their preprints to the Chinese preprint system, Sciencepaper Online. The results showed that Trust is the key determinant of Attitude towards preprint sharing, while Anticipated Extrinsic Reward impacts both Image and Sense of Self-Worth which further impact Attitude. Attitude and Subjective Norm both impact Intention. These findings and their implications for theory and practice contribute to the theoretical development of the structural model concerning quick sharing of preprints both in the specific context of Sciencepaper Online and other quick sharing platforms more generally, and also provide useful insights into and helpful suggestions for Chinese preprint sharing practice.

Also in this issue, Alan Hopkison contributes his usual useful tips about the use and development of CDS/ISIS, while Archie Dick discusses ‘Why epistemology matters’, and Msafiri issues a cry for help: ‘It’s a mad world – and who can save us?’

In addition to the contributions from our regular columnists, the seven papers in the next issue will again deal with a wide variety of topics and locations, including: ‘Determinants of citizens’ intent to use government websites in Taiwan’, ‘On considering the application of Amartya Sen’s capability approach to an information-based rights framework’, ‘Effective records and information management as a catalyst for fighting corruption’, ‘E-learning adoption in the banking workplace in Indonesia: an empirical study’, ‘Integrated library management systems: a review of choices made and their sustainability in South Africa’, ‘Publishing and sharing library resources with the ABCD site’, and ‘Information seeking behaviour of physicians in Tanzania’. Look out for these in the May issue!