IRIS NEWS

Congratulations

Alison Adam and **Helen Richardson** (along with co-author Debra Howcroft from the University of Manchester) have been recognized by the Emerald Management Reviews (EMR) Independent Review Board as the authors of one of the top fifty management articles of 2004. Out of 20,000 articles reviewed thier paper:

'A decade of neglect: reflecting on gender and IS' published in *New Technology, Work and Employment*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2004, was singled out for a citation of excellence.

"EMR extends its congratulations and international recognition of this outstanding contribution to the literature and body of knowledge".

Who's Been Doing What?

Together with Professor Kobbacy, **Sunil Vadera** is co-organising the *European Conference on Intelligent Management Systems in Operations Conference*. The Conference brings together researchers working at the interface of AI and operations management, covering topics such as Maintenance, Fault diagnosis, Knowledge Management, E-Business and E-Marketing. Around 30 papers from throughout the world have been submitted. The Conference will be held at the Lowry Centre on the 28 and 29th June, and a provisional programme can be found at: **http://www.orsoc.org.uk/**

Forty delegates from different HEIs and associated organisations attended the Higher Education Academy one day workshop on *Foundation Degrees in Information and Computer Sciences,* held at Salford on 18 March 2005. **Chris Procter**, **Polly Sobreperez** and **Andrew Young** helped organise and spoke at the event, which recognised innovative practice at Salford and the difficulties in developing and managing such degrees in our discipline.

Ben Light organised the *Gender and IS Workshop* at the University of Salford where Prof. Eileen Trauth, who is Visiting Prof. with us was keynote speaker.

Eileen is due back with us from 5 June 2005, and if anyone is interested in meeting with her, they should contact Ben Light (B.Light@salford.ac.uk).

Invited Seminar: **Light, B**. 2004 "The Adoption and Rejection of an ERP Package at Threads". ESRC Seminar Series: Transformative Change and the Commodification of Information Technology. Nottingham University Business School.

Ben Light is a Panelist: 2005 "Jumping the high-jump and landing in the sand – The issues involved in moving from being a PhD. student to being a full member of the IS community", The European Conference on Information Systems, with Will Venters, London School of Economics, Mary Darking, London School of Economics, and Jan Pries Heje, the IT University of Copenhagen, Björn Lundell, University of Skövde (May 2005).

Prof. Basden, in his new Chair of Human Factors and Philosophy of Information Systems, has been focusing his attention on contributing to debates in philosophy itself about such things as modal aspects and the role of technology. As founder member of The Centre for philosophy, Technology and Social Systems, which celebrates its tenth year of existence this year, he is editing a new book, 'In search of an integrated vision for technology', with his colleague Prof. Sytse Strijbos of the NorthWest University, South Africa, and the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, to be published under Kluwer's series of monographs on Contemporary Systems Thinking. He also presented the work of IRIS at the 2005 Working Conference of the CPTS.

Upcoming Events

IRIS Research Week, 6 to 8 June 2005

IRIS is to host a 'Research Week' commencing Monday, 6 June to Wednesday, 8 June 2005. The objectives of the event are to showcase our research and recruit research students.

As part of the Research week there will be a 2 day PhD Conference. PhD students will be presenting their papers on the 6 and 7 June. The timetable for presentations will be made public prior to the Conference.

Postgraduate Research Opportunities Cheese & Wine Open Evenings
6 and 7 June, 6pm to 8pm

IRIS is hosting two open evenings to recruit potential students. Why not come along and offer your support. Please contact Donna Bailey for more details.

Inaugural Lecture

Alison Adam, 15 June 2005, 5pm, Rayleigh Room

Desires and Devices: Exploring the Gender-Technology Relation.

The University of Salford Learning and Teaching Research Network and the Higher Education Research Centre are pleased to announce, **Education in a Changing Environment 3**, to be held on 12-13 January 2006.

A conference focusing on educational research and development in post-compulsory education, for all those engaged and interested in educational practice and research.

Submission deadline: 16 September 2005
http://www.edu.salford.ac.uk/her/conference

Funding

Helen Richardson, Alison Adam, Claire Keogh and Angela Tattersall have won an ESF research bid of almost £250k to investigate the gender pay gap in the IT sector. The DEPICT project will run from January 2005 until December 2006.

Prof. Basden has secured prestigious funding from the Leverhulme Trust for a ten-month visit by Prof. Heinz Klein, one of the leading, senior figures in the world community of Information Systems. Prof. Klein will be helping IRIS and ISI with their research planning, and will give a major series of lectures on the turns in philosophy that have influenced information systems, which will draw on his extensive life experience in the field.

Prof. Basden has secured funding under the Templeton Foundation to set up UK-wide discussion forums on the Religious Roots of Information Systems, as part of the Sophia Europe Consortium. In doing so, he will be accompanied by Drs. Elaine Storkey, resident of Tear Fund, and Carole Brooke, of the University of Lincoln.

NEED HELP WITH APPLYING FOR FUNDING

Justin Smith has been appointed as Reserch Development Coordinator, to assist IRIS members with funding applications. Justin can be contacted at j.smith@salford.ac.uk / 55069.

Publications

Refereed Journal Papers

Parmar D. & **Trotter E**. 2005, 'Keeping our students: identifying factors that influence student withdrawal and strategies to enhance the experience and retention of first year students'. *Learning and Teaching in the Social Sciences* vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 149-168.

Trotter, E & Cove, G. 2005, 'Student retention: an exploration of the issues prevalent on a healthcare degree programme with mainly mature students'. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 29-42.

'Technical Opinion' in CACM: **Light, B**. (2005), "Potential Pitfalls in Packaged Software Adoption", *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery*, vol. 48, no. 5, pp. 119-121.

Conferences

Trotter, E. & Cove, G. Presented their paper ''Student retention: an exploration of the issues prevalent on a healthcare degree programme with mainly mature students', at *EDU at the Society for Research into Higher Education Annual Conference*, December 2004.

Sunil Vadera presented a paper on "Using ittgenstein's family resemblance principle to learn exemplars" at the *International Conference on Model Based Reasoning* held in Pavia, Italy in December 2004. He also gave invited seminar on Bayesian Networks and Exemplar Learning at the University of Exeter in January 2005.

Kutar, M. & **Light, B**. (2005) Exploring Cultural Issues in the Packaged Software Industry, in Proceedings of the *13th ECIS*, Regensberg, Germany. (Forthcoming).

Rae, J., Taylor G. & **Roberts, C**. "Collaborative Learning with Salford", paper presented at the *Higher Education Academy's Business, Management and Accounting Conference*, Ealing, April 2005.
Prof. Roberts was an invited Theme Chair at the Conference.

Light, B. Discussant: ICIS 2004, Washington D.C. Paper: Rosemann, Vessey and Weber - Alignment in ES Implementations: The Role of Ontological Distance.

Editorships

In the broad research community that IRIS embraces, I would like to alert authors to a couple of special journal issues that I am guest editing, to be published BEFORE the RAE 2008!

Lynette Kvasny from Penn State University in the USA and me are guest editors for a special issue of Information Technology and People on Critical Research in Information Systems. The deadline is 29th July 2005.

Lynette, Andrea Tapia (also from Penn State University) and me are guest editors for a special issue of SSCORE (Social Science Computer Review) on Applying critical theory and critical social methodologies to the study of ICT's. The deadline is September 12th 2005.

For further details email H.Richardson@salford.ac.uk

I look forward to receiving your papers!

Ben Light is Associate Editor for ICIS 2005 and ECIS 2005.

Tom McMaster has been asked to serve on the Editorial Board of IT & People.

Projects

CAB - Collaborations Across Borders project is approaching its completion in September 2005 (http://www.cabweb.net). Our biggest successes have been setting up a portal to support a variety of collaborative activities for students, and establishing a lively virtual community of tutors across the world (http://moodle.cabweb.net).
Already the number of users registered on the portal has grown to more than 1000, from more then 20 countries.

We have achieved the project goal of building a network of tutors, that has expanded from the core of project partners, who will continue to use the portal for supporting their collaborative activities, sharing their experience with others colleagues and disseminating their practices. All these activities aim to develop students' and tutors' global collaborative knowledge building.

The main research of the project centres on sustainability of virtual communities, pedagogical foundations for online collaboration, intercultural issues online and ethos development for online communities. In these areas of research Salford staff have published 3 journal papers and almost 15 conference papers, symposiums, workshops and invited talks, nationally and internationally. Through the CAB project we have established working relationships with scholars elsewhere in Europe.

Janice Whatley
Frances Bell
Elena Zaitseva

FUNSIEC PROJECT: RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

FUNSIEC (Feasibility Study for a Unified Semantic Infrastructure in the European Construction Sector) was essentially devoted to answer the following question: is the OSIECS (Open Semantic Infrastructure for the European Construction Sector) feasible from a technical perspective and usable from the business angle? The FUNSIEC quest concluded that OSIECS is technically feasible and exploitable to support e-business practices in the sector. However, this represents a big challenge, especially due to the need to educate the sector regarding the potential benefits that can be

achieved using tools and technologies related to the Semantic Resources[1] (SRs).

FUNSIEC has conducted a feasibility study on the creation and maintenance of the OSIECS at technical and business levels. FUNSIEC proposes a framework designed around the SRs currently available for the construction sector in Europe. How SRs can be used to support and catalyse the adoption of e-business practices is the primary question investigated by the project.

The major results produced by FUNSIEC are the following:

1. The OSIECS Kernel, which creates both OSIECS meta-model / model
2. The FUNSIEC methodology to integrate SRs into OSIECS and
3. The FUNSIEC Semantic Experience Centre (FSEC)

The OSIECS kernel is a software tool providing a (semi)automatic process to support the creation of OSIECS meta-model and model. The OSIECS kernel was developed using mapping techniques and exploiting the ONDIL system. Both OSIECS meta-model/model were designed taking the SRs currently available for the construction sector, namely the ISO 12006, the IFC model, the e-COGNOS ontology, and the bcBuildingDefinitions taxonomy. As these SRs are not represented in the same format, "transformers" were developed to support the migration from their native formats to OWL. Other formats will require new transformers that can be quickly developed through the FUNSIEC methodology to integrate SRs into OSIECS. More information can be found at http://www.funsiec.org

Finally, the FSEC (www.funsiec.org/fsec), main vector of the education axis in FUNSIEC, is a Web portal where the users can have "hands-on" experience with the SRs. Tutorials, business scenarios, films, and management of SRs are available through the FSEC. The graphical support is provided by the treebolic tool. This portal is intended to be kept running as a catalyser for future initiatives based on the FUNSIEC results.

VE-Forum

We are glad to inform you about the latest developments of VE-Forum. VE-Forum is a growing community of consultants, practitioners, researchers and technologists focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with networked organisations and virtual enterprises. The major objective of VE-Forum is to offer a central forum or "cross-road" to all communities related to the VO domain; we

therefore invite all who are active in related communities and projects – whether from academia, industry or service providers – to make use of the various opportunities provided by VE-Forum and to contribute to building a shared vision and knowledge basis in the domain.

To be part of the VE-Forum community please register at http://www.ve-forum.org/. As a registered user you can subscribe to the newsletter, suggest items to be included in the newsletters, join or create your own Interest Group to exchange ideas and experiences about a certain field of interest in our domain, etc.

Last but not least, here are some key indicators of VE Forum site activity during the last 12 weeks:
· Newly registered users: 301 (total: 1446)
· Average number of visitors per week: 8960
· Average number of document downloads per week: 1340
· Most popular public areas (average visits per week during last month)
– Library: 570
– eJov: 270
– News & events: 110
- Most popular Interest Groups (average visits per week during last month)
– VOIG: 109
– IG Collaboration tools: 82

We hope you will find VE-Forum interesting.

Simona Barresi, Yacine Rezgui, and Hermann Loeh

New Staff

Ms. Simona Barresi and **Dr. Norman Murray** have been appointed as EPSRC Academic Fellows. The EPSRC Academic Fellowship is aimed at providing contract researchers with a more attractive and stable path into academia.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

Having successfully completed his interim assessment in January 2005, Aleksej Heinze is now finishing his data collection stage. If there are any lecturers who would like to share their views of the part time IT degree in the Information Systems Institute - please let him know (a.heinze@salford.ac.uk). More information about his research can be found here: www.aheinze.me.uk.

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[1] Semantic Resource is an expression coined in the SPICE project which refers all ontology-similar entities, such as taxonomies, dictionaries, thesauri, etc.. Two arguments support this choice: there is no consensus about what an ontology really is and there is a myriad of expressions currently available to define ontologies and similar resources.

New Postgraduate Research Students

January 2005

First Name	Surname	Award	Supervisor	FT/PT
Mohammed	AL HAMELI	PhD	Rezgui,Y.	FT
Maha	AL RASHID	PhD	Blackie, N.	FT

April 2005

First Name	Surname	Award	Supervisor	FT/PT
Maytha	AL ALI	PhD	Rezgui, Y.	Split Site
James	KAHONGE	PhD	Black, N.	FT
Abdunnaser	HAMMUNDA	PhD	Rezgui, Y.	Split Site
Sophis	TARAUIRAS	MPhil	Saraee, M.	FT

Graduated Postgraduate Research Students

Congratulations to Adam Omielan who successfully completed his MPhil on "Evaluation of a Cost Sensitive Genetic Classifier".

Research Newsletter Submissions:
The next issue of the IRIS Newsletter will be published in August 2005.
Submissions to the Newsletter must be sent to Joanne Perrott at-mail: j.e.perrott@salford.ac.uk by 30/07/2004.