In this last issue of volume six, JITTA presents five interesting new papers, including a state-of-research review and four other full research papers.

What is the state of research on factors affecting IT investments? Demihan’s (2005) state of research review on factors affecting IT investment decisions is potentially a rich source document for new researchers and others interested in ideas for new research questions on the economic and strategic management of information systems. She reviewed 46 studies published in leading IS journals and conferences, including a mixture of classical and contemporary papers, placing them in a framework of five IT investment factors, IT investment, organizational performance, and justification. Examination of the resulting framed stream of research reveals a number of opportunities for valuable new research based on what questions aren’t yet answered. In conclusion, she identifies five fundamental research questions of importance and urgency for current researchers to pursue.

Can we better understand the adoption of new technology by combining TAM with other theory? Wang, Hsu, and Fang (2005) have extended the TAM model to incorporate network externalities in the context of instant messaging services. In doing so, they not only validated the TAM model in this context, but also provided evidence for the contribution of network externalities to technology acceptance. The study provides interesting concepts of value to practitioners who want to convince users to adopt a new technology, i.e., suggestions that users need to know about ease of use and usefulness, as well as the number of users and potential users.

Can “trust promoting seals” effectively provide the assurance that online consumers require that they are dealing with reputable sellers? Prior research suggests that the answer is yes. Zhang (2005) extends this research with a study of different types of trust promoting seals and their effectiveness for different products and consumers. The results have implications for the value of such seals to the merchant.

What is a new system worth to the firm? Hallikainen, Peffers, and Saarinen (2005) consider the problem of IS project evaluation, ex ante and ex post, its use, satisfaction with it, and learning to do it better. In an empirical study involving a survey of 38 large Finnish firms, they develop the data necessary to tease out some relationships between improvements in the IS evaluation process and evaluation quantity and between evaluation improvement and executive satisfaction. They found that evaluation process improvements led to more
evaluation, but that more evaluation didn’t necessarily lead to higher quality evaluation.

Clearly this is one area in which IS researchers have only scratched the surface. IS and other executives aren’t at all happy with the methods available to them for IS evaluation. With its small sample and, therefore, simple analytics, this paper shouldn’t be regarded as the definitive answer to any questions. Instead, it should be regarded as a call for research that IS executives would consider very important.

How should we model the virtual organization? Mowshowitz and Kawaguchi (2005) model it as a computer program, voSwitch 1.0. The virtual organization is a management paradigm, rather than a dichotomous reality, that is, an organization can be a little or a lot virtual. One easy way to think about virtuality is to use the industrial revolutionary concept of division of labor as a metaphor. The virtual organization is just the next step in industrial management, enabled by cheap, IT based coordination.

voSwitch models the virtual organization as sets of requirements, e.g., raw materials, satisfiers, e.g., raw material sources, and mappings between them. Satisfiers have qualities, such as price, volatility, longevity, etc, fourteen in all. The authors suggest that the model might be developed as a decision support tool in the assignment of resources to resource needs in real businesses. The article provides demonstrations of the program’s functionality.

Two recently appointed senior editors accepted papers for this issue, Starling Hunter accepted the Zhang (2005) paper and Bartel Van de Walle and Murray Turoff accepted the paper by Mowshowitz and Kawaguchi (2005). Van de Walle and Turoff recently compiled the special issue on Emergency Preparedness and Response Information Systems (JITTA, 6:3) and Van de Walle decided to join our group of senior editors. James Kwok, who accepted the Wang, Hsu, and Fang (2005) paper, recently moved to California State University at Long Beach, where he is almost certainly enjoying that California living! We’d also like to welcome Tuure Tuunanen, who is joining Auckland University in the fall, to the senior editorial group.

Rajiv Kishore, who has been a JITTA senior editor since 1999, joins me as a co-editor in chief beginning January 1, 2005. Kishore will take responsibility for the assignment of most papers to senior editors. I will focus on special issues, papers of particular interest to me, and general management of the journal. I’ll continue to serve as the journal’s publisher. I’m very grateful that Rajiv has agreed to take on this role.

REFERENCES