

March 2023

## Editors' Comments

Iris Junglas

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/misqe>

---

### Recommended Citation

Junglas, Iris (2023) "Editors' Comments," *MIS Quarterly Executive*: Vol. 22: Iss. 1, Article 1.  
Available at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/misqe/vol22/iss1/1>

This material is brought to you by the AIS Journals at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in MIS Quarterly Executive by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact [elibrary@aisnet.org](mailto:elibrary@aisnet.org).

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

I begin my term as editor of *MIS Quarterly Executive* by thanking Gabe Piccoli for leading the journal over the past four years and spearheading many impactful initiatives. Remarkable among these were his commitment to attract quality submissions, his insightful editorials on how to write for a management audience, and his commitment to our founding editor's mission. That mission, to "encourage practice-based research and disseminate the results of that research in a manner that makes its relevance and utility readily apparent,"<sup>1</sup> is mine as well. But this is not a goodbye for Gabe; he will stay with the journal as my consigliere and in supporting Bill Kettinger with our practice-oriented track at the Hawaiian International Conference on Systems Sciences, a rich source for submissions to the journal.

In taking over as Editor-in-Chief, I took a close look at *MIS Quarterly Executive's* history and talked with former editors and others present when *MIS Quarterly Executive* first went live. I found a truly amazing story, and one to be shared. To side-step trouble, I am mostly avoiding direct quotes. Those with attributions have been vetted by that individual.<sup>2</sup>

### How it all started...

It all started in 1999 with Allen Lee, *MIS Quarterly* Editor-in-Chief at the time.<sup>3</sup> He noted: "As EIC, and even before, I always felt that MISQ and the field overall should address practice; the one or two paragraphs at the end of MISQ articles that addressed practitioners, I thought, was not enough." Allen approached Jeanne Ross and Jack Rockart, both working at MIT, with the idea of starting a new journal in the field of Information Systems. Jack, after a bit of initial reluctance, soon agreed to be our first EIC.

Allen's proposal had come at a time when the dearth of practice-oriented research had become obvious. In March of 1999 the "application

section" disappeared from the *MIS Quarterly*, despite the fact that its founding mission sought "to provide a journal which is useful for the practitioner and at the same time appeals to those interested in theory and research."<sup>4</sup> In 1999, there was no outlet within the field for "business-academic" articles, even as the debate about "rigor versus relevance" preoccupied many.<sup>5</sup>

With the vision in hand, and buy-in from Jeanne and Jack, others came onboard. While the individual stories are a bit hazy, the evolving editorial team soon included: Cynthia Beath, Carol Brown, Alan Dennis, Mike Vitale, Leslie Willcocks, and Bob Zmud.<sup>6</sup> And while the vision for the journal was clear, the name was not. Allen Lee insisted on the name *MIS Quarterly Executive*. He also made it his mission to rewrite *MIS Quarterly* articles suitable for *MIS Quarterly Executive*. But what he encountered was rather disheartening: "I went through seven years of MISQ and to tell you the truth, I could not find one article to write a practitioner article from."

In retrospect, Allen explained to me: "In the social sciences, which dominates business schools, they describe and explain empirical reality, where the motivation, in what Thomas Kuhn calls normal science, is to extend and refine current theory. In some other fields like the professions, such as engineering, architecture, and planning, the motivation is not about theory but about changing reality. From a philosophical perspective, the professions are completely different. The fields that take the normal science approach ask: What's wrong with theory, and how can we improve theory? Unlike the professions which ask: What is the real-world problem to solve, and how can we improve the real world? For business schools, it is hard to change the forces behind that paradigm. But it can be done. Look at medical schools, you have PhDs and MDs, and some with both; what biologists do and what physicians do will always be different."

1 See <https://aisel.aisnet.org/misqe/aimsandscope.html>

2 My interviewees, in alphabetical order, were: Carol Brown, Alan Dennis, Jan DeGross, Alan Lee, Dorothy Leidner, Gabe Piccoli, Jeanne Ross, and Mary Sumner.

3 Allen Lee was Editor-in-Chief at *MIS Quarterly* from 1999 to 2001.

4 Dickson, G. (1977) Editorial. *MIS Quarterly*, 1(1)

5 Davenport, T. H., Markus, M. L. (1999) Rigor vs. Relevance Revisited: Response to Benbasat and Zmud. *MIS Quarterly*, 23(1), 19-23 p. 21

6 Ross, J. (2008) Editorial. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 7(4)

Like physicians, managers have a much different perspective. They are not driven by theory but by problems, and sometimes by opportunities. In the fast-paced world of information technology, they usually learn from each other, from vendors, or from consultants—rather than from our scholarly outlets.

### The uniqueness of the review process...

Another challenge, and still one today, was finding quality submissions. Writing for an *MIS Quarterly Executive* audience is not a simple task as very few IS researchers have been trained in this art. Rather, they learn to write for each other, and do so in the language of science, not practice. But what stood out from the very beginning of *MIS Quarterly Executive* was the willingness to work with the authors, or as Jack Rockart described it: “to find and nurture the pony that was in there somewhere.”

Ensuring that the underlying research was credible and tied to the conclusions and recommendations of the paper—even if it was to eventually only be summarized in an appendix—was difficult to instill at the time, and still remains this way today. But it is an underpinning of quality research and a required element of *MIS Quarterly Executive* papers.

The team also felt that they could not develop authors without using a different peer-review process. When *MIS Quarterly Executive* started, long before Zoom, reviewers were asked to read the paper and then join the other members of the review panel on a phone call. Their reaction was generally very supportive. They made connections and learned from one another in the review process. While the primary objective was to be efficient and to provide one voice to the author team, the positive feedback from reviewers was an unexpected benefit. Sometimes the Senior Editor would also set up a call with the authors to go over the condensed feedback, providing another surprisingly positive outcome.

This type of review process not only provided faster turnaround times but was also a developmental and not least social opportunity. It helped new authors learn how to communicate to practitioners. It also made the review process much faster and enabled *MIS Quarterly Executive* to provide early insights on new and emerging topics.

### The funding of it all...

A new journal costs money. Despite the free labor that was going into the editorial process, funds had to be secured for editing, printing, and mailing. Alan Dennis, who joined Jack Rockart and Jeanne Ross early on, used his funds from Indiana University to jumpstart the journal.<sup>7</sup> He took on the role of Managing Editor and publisher of *MIS Quarterly Executive*, while Jack, Jeanne and the board focused on its contents. He also approached Gordon Davis about licensing the new journal under the *MIS Quarterly* umbrella. Gordon, seeing the value, quickly agreed but retained the copyright for the University of Minnesota.

Jack Rockart, highly credible with practitioners as director of MIT's Center for Information Systems Research, attracted ongoing funding from the Society for Information Management (SIM). Jack, I am told, nurtured the SIM relationship dearly over the years, including attending many SIM local chapter meetings. Today, SIM continues to support *MIS Quarterly Executive*, and its members have free access to our articles. This issue, for example, includes the “SIM IT Issues and Trends Study,” an annual study first published in 1980.

By 2018, *MIS Quarterly Executive's* financial surplus, fueled by the cost savings of online distribution, had grown enough that Indiana University, for tax reasons, was required to remove it from its balance sheet. Alan Dennis, simultaneously AIS President Elect and publisher of *MIS Quarterly Executive*, helped with the transition of its financial surplus to the Association for Information Systems.

### Today...

Today, *MIS Quarterly Executive* remains financially sound, and our research well regarded. Our papers have won the AIS Senior Scholars Best Paper Awards five times, and many papers are highly cited. What we value more, however, are practitioners who bring *MIS Quarterly Executive* articles to the attention of their colleagues or tell us about the value of them in their work and organizations. We also value self-reports from faculty who use our papers in their classrooms. To put it in Allen Lee's words: “*MISQE is a shining*

---

<sup>7</sup> I was told that the money that he fronted was paid back to him in full.

example of what business schools can do in the world.”

### Tomorrow...

If indeed business schools truly seek to “address business challenges,” “advance management practice,” “accelerate impactful research,” or “transform organizations,” as we find in mission statements, then *MIS Quarterly Executive* articles can serve as great evidence for deans and heads of DBA programs alike to proudly, and confidently, share with business partners. In a world where the relevance of higher education is being increasingly challenged, the importance of *MIS Quarterly Executive*, and similar peer-reviewed practitioner-valued publication outlets in other disciplines, has never been greater.

In this spirit, I would like to offer an updated motto to underline this thought: “*MIS Quarterly Executive* – where research shapes and is shaped by practice.” Towards that end, here is a brief synopsis of articles...

### ... In this Issue

The first issue of 2023 has four contributions: Three research articles and the annual SIM IT trend study. The 2023 IT trend study, by Vess Johnson, Russell Torres, Chris Maurer, Katia Guerra, Smriti Srivastava and Hossein Mohit, surveyed 797 IT executives. After 42 years, the IT Trend Study still serves as a primary resource for those to understand what is at the forefront of digital leaders’ minds when it comes to IT management, IT investments, and IT talent. This year, the most pressing issue identified is cybersecurity—a topic that *MIS Quarterly Executive* will tackle as a special issue this year at the SIM pre-ICIS workshop in Hyderabad. A call for papers will soon be forthcoming from the special issue editors led by Stuart Madnick of MIT, Jeffery Proudfoot of Bentley College, and Mary Sumner of the University of Oklahoma.

Next, we have two papers around the topic of AI. The paper “How Siemens Democratized Artificial Intelligence” looks at the challenges that AI projects cause within the organization, particularly when the projects are initiated bottom-up. Written by Benjamin van Giffen and Helmuth Ludwig, the study describes the ongoing balancing act between decentralization and centralization when enabling innovation with AI.

The paper “Successfully Organizing AI Innovation Through Collaboration with Startups” is based on an insider-outsider ethnography conducted across two different AI startups and showcases six different use cases. Written by Jana Oehmichen, Alexander Schult and John Dong, the study illustratively reflects on each of the use cases, zooming in on the variety of organizational challenges faced and how each of those should be navigated.

Lastly, the paper “Identifying and Addressing Senior Executives’ Different Perceptions of the Value of IT Investments,” written by Alastair Tipple, Hameed Chughtai, and Jonathan H. Klein, provides a glimpse into the attitudinal differences towards IT that are apparent in senior management teams. The paper showcases how a technique like the Repertory Grid can be used to identify actions plans and get executives on the same page.

Enjoy reading, and hopefully sharing, those articles!

Iris Junglas  
Editor-in-Chief