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Editorial: CAIS, The First Five Years

Paul Gray

Claremont Graduate University

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WELCOME TO THE COMMUNICATIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Paul Gray

Claremont Graduate University

cais@cgu.edu

ABSTRACT

WELCOME to the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* (CAIS). With the publication of this editorial, the first four articles, and an opinion article on January 4, 1999 the journal is now a reality.

What CAIS Is About

The *Communications of AIS*, like its sister publication, the *Journal of AIS* (which will begin publishing in mid-1999) are two new electronic publications of the Association for Information Systems (AIS). The basic philosophy of both publications is to encourage communication among the society's members. The two publications are different in their content and approach. Whereas the *Journal* is a high-quality research journal focused on presenting research results, the *Communications* publishes articles on a wide range of subjects of interest to the membership, reaching beyond research results. Specifically, the *Communications of AIS* aims to provide articles on subjects falling outside the focus of many research journals including:

- the state of the art
- applications
- cases
- opinion
- innovation and novel concepts
- teaching and teaching notes
- professional issues
- literature surveys
- international work and points of view

and more. Articles can deal with technical subjects (e.g., data base design, systems analysis) managerial subjects (e.g., strategic use, implementation) or current topics (e.g., reengineering, e-commerce, outsourcing, data mining).

Unique features of CAIS include:

Electronic Publication
Options on Refereeing
Speed of Publication
Archiving
Editorial Board
Contact with Tenure Committees
Each of these features is discussed below.

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION

AIS journals are delivered to subscribers electronically. There will be no paper copy! The entire publication process from submission, through review, revision, and final edit is electronic. Electronic publication has a number of implications:

- The cycle from submission to delivery is shortened. Every effort is made to ensure that decisions about papers are made in a timely manner. Once an article is accepted for publication, there is no need to wait for the next available issue after such and such a number of publication cycles. Given the nature of the delivery system, articles will be delivered to subscribers immediately when they become available. The numbering system will be Vol. X (year), No. y. For example, the third article in 1999 will be Volume 1 (1999), No. 3
- Authors are required to adhere strictly to the publication guidelines to facilitate the rapid turnaround, which we intend to make a hallmark of AIS publications.
- The *Communications of AIS* does not have page limits. Authors are encouraged to submit backup material (such as detailed data, explanatory appendices, screen images, survey measures, and programs) to create a richness in the articles that can usually not be found in conventional printed journals because of their limited space.
- Although the *Communications* makes it possible to publish complex graphics, the journal is acutely conscious that some of its readers will not have the latest technology available to them. Therefore, to ensure the widest accessibility, articles may be edited so that the body of the article is a stand-alone document. Links and multimedia supplements are included in one or more appendices. Readers have the option of downloading articles with such appendices as HTML documents

Options on Refereeing.

Authors submitting articles to the *Communications* have a choice in how they want their paper reviewed. They can request either that their paper be refereed formally by two or more referees or that a member of the editorial board only review the paper. Articles that are fully refereed are so marked. Authors must make a choice upon submitting the article and cannot change their preference during the process.

Authors choosing to have their articles refereed by the *Communications of AIS* should submit the names of two reviewers whom they suggest as appropriate for reviewing their paper. A member of the CAIS editorial board handles refereeing. The editorial board member can employ the named reviewers or not at his or her discretion. In any case, at least one additional reviewer will be chosen by CAIS. Reviews are double blind; authors do not know who reviews their paper and reviewers do not know the names of the authors. The editor, of course, knows the names of all involved.

Speed of Publication

In analyzing where AIS could best serve its members, it was clear that the length of time between submitting a paper and its publication was much too long for most reputable journals. The time delay consists of several parts, the longest of which were in reviewing and in the interval between acceptance of an article and the time it reaches its audience. By designing CAIS as an electronic journal, the time delays between acceptance and publication could be minimized.

To reduce the often lengthy time between submitting a paper and a decision by the journal, several steps are being taken. Authors who choose to have the paper reviewed by an editor (see section on refereeing above), should certainly receive quicker service. If an author asks that the paper be refereed conventionally, the members of the editorial board try to speed the process as much as possible. One approach is to use multiple referees but make a decision once a sufficient number have been received. A second is an electronic refereeing tracking system being developed by Munir Mandviwalla and his students at Temple University. Occasional long reviewing times will occur no matter what system is put in place. We hope, however, that the average transit time between submission and decision will be shorter for CAIS than for other journals.

Archiving

AIS maintains a digital archive of all articles published in the *Communications*. This archive is designed to ensure a permanent record of all items published in the *Communications*. If demand is sufficient, CAIS will also issue an annual CD-ROM containing all articles published in the preceding year.

Editorial Board

The CAIS editorial board is large and distinguished. Its members were chosen to provide broad representation. It includes people from large and small universities from throughout the world. They are in tune with the objectives of the journal and pledged to help provide speedy turnaround. A small advisory board meets with the editor at the annual AIS Americas and ICIS meetings to review the progress of the journal. A senior editorial board, headed by Henry C. Lucas, Editor-in-Chief of AIS publications provides policy. The members are listed at the end of this editorial and of every article.

Tenure and Promotion Committees

The AIS Senior Editorial Board and members of the Council of AIS are acutely aware that in many institutions in the United States committees and administrators involved in the tenure and promotion process do not yet evaluate electronic publications at the same level as conventional print publications. This attitude exists even when papers receive the same careful review by the same senior people. It is our intent to deal with this problem head on. As a first step, Gordon Davis, 1998 President of AIS and Henry C. Lucas, Editor-in-Chief of AIS Publications composed a letter describing the review processes and quality control of both CAIS and JAIS. This letter was sent to Deans of Business Schools in the United States. A personalized version will be sent upon request to any author's tenure or promotion committee.

Author Information

If you have an article that you believe is appropriate for the *Communications of AIS*, you can submit it for consideration by sending an e-mail to: cais@cgu.edu, with the article attached in Word format. If it turns out that your article is more suitable for JAIS, the editor will transfer it there.

The official language of the *Communications of AIS* is English.

Submission of an article to CAIS implies the authors' certification that the author owns the manuscript's copyright and that the manuscript is not currently under review by any other journal or conference proceedings.

Complete information about submitting articles to CAIS may be found at: <http://cais.isworld.org>

Conclusion

The *Communications of AIS* is a great adventure for our profession. I believe it is a new journal with a great future. Being electronic, it demonstrates by deed that the members of AIS see the future is digital. By publishing across the entire spectrum of IS activities, it is designed to serve the needs of researchers, teachers, and practitioners. By undertaking innovations in publication, it seeks to make the journal responsive to the needs of all its readers.

The ultimate success of CAIS depends on quality of what it publishes. Here is where you, the reader, come in. Your input of high quality manuscripts is critical. Your feedback on the journal is essential. Your ideas for improving what we do are welcomed.

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EDITOR
Paul Gray
Claremont Graduate University

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