

The Editor's Column

The first issue of our fourth volume includes research and practice articles on two general themes: electronic commerce and electronic government. The first of the articles is a research article by Arnold A. Kamis and Michael J. Davern that is titled "An Exploratory Model of Decision Quality and its Antecedents for Category Novices Using Multiple-Stage Shopping Engines." The authors examine tradeoffs in decision-making support for online shoppers, and find results that will be of interest both to researchers and developers.

The other three articles are practice articles that provide an in-depth analysis and description of merchant reputation systems, e-service development, and ubiquitous government. The first practice article is by Ming Wang, titled "E-Satisfaction Ratings on Merchant Reputation Systems: An Exploratory Study." Being able to assess the reputation of an online seller is essential from both seller and buyer perspectives. This article describes current practice with respect to reputation systems and provides evidence for how customers interact with them.

The next article is titled "Barriers to Electronic Service Development" and is authored by Costas Vassilakis, George Lepouras, John Fraser, Simon Haston, and Panagiotis Georgiadis. The article provides an in-depth view of key issues with respect to electronic government initiatives. As much as we all hope to have instant and easy access to electronic services from our governments, the reality is complex and many barriers exist. The article provides a thorough analysis of those barriers from the point of view of different stakeholders.

The last article is authored by Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko and is titled "Towards Ubiquitous Government: The Case of Finland." This article also addresses electronic government, but with the interesting focus on "u-government." Ubiquitous government is defined and the state of the art in various parts of the world is described. An in-depth focus on Finland makes these issues real at the level of the people engaged in trying to bring this concept to life.

We have one editorial board change to announce with this issue. Senior Editor Joey George is concluding his term with the journal and we thank him sincerely for his contributions and service, which have been faithful and meaningful from the founding of the journal itself. Professor George has accepted an appointment as Editor-in-Chief of *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, and we congratulate him on that achievement and express our gratitude for the time he spent with us.

As always, we actively invite different perspectives and articles on the wide variety of topics related to the over-arching concept of electronic services. Prospective authors should feel free to contact our office anytime with questions about potential submissions.

Ilze Zigurs
Editor-in-Chief