

**IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF A NEW KIND OF IS JOURNAL****Ken Peffers, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**

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**W**e are extremely proud to release issue 4:1 as the first issue of the repositioned *JITTA*. It contains three research articles and a book review, each of which is an excellent exemplar for one of the journal's innovative paper styles.

Potter and Balthazard, in "Understanding Human Interaction and Performance in the Virtual Team," have written *JITTA*'s first "state-of-research review" article. In this new paper type authors review "several new papers in a research stream that contain new theory, research results or make other contributions that should be made available to the IS research community quickly." In this case the authors briefly reviewed general (historical) research around the topic of interest and then focused on three yet to be published papers from their own major project. Alternatively, a state-of-research review article could result from the confluence of several papers presented in a conference or workshop or the review author could collect working papers, conference papers and published articles from a variety of researchers who are independently working on a common set of problems.

State-of-research review articles are intended to help the IS community to understand the current state of IS research around a focused set of problems and issues. These articles can help researchers understand exciting new work years before it would be published in the traditional

journals. Such early understanding can help improve the velocity and effectiveness of ongoing research by encouraging collaboration and stimulating new research ideas. State-of-research review articles are very different from traditional IS review articles. Traditional review articles review historical literature, i.e., research that has already been published in peer reviewed journals. They are often historically and topically comprehensive. They tend to be long articles that take a long time to review and publish. Consequently, they serve a different need than the state-of-research review, for which the primary focus is current and on-going research. *JITTA*'s state of research review articles can be much shorter and generally review work that is not yet published in journals as well as published work.

Here Potter and Balthazard present the results of a set of studies investigating human performance in virtual teams. This is particularly exciting research and of interest to both researchers and professionals because many multi-national firms find themselves with teams composed of temporary and permanent members in many locations, in several organizations, without having given much thought to how to make such teams work. A CIO of a global bank recently remarked to me that his organization had literally hundreds of virtual teams in operation. Briefly put, Potter and Balthazard's studies suggest that behavior and style of the participants, rather than technology, may dominate performance. Importantly, they provide managers with some ideas about how to predict team performance and how to intervene, if necessary.

Bryant's "Re-grounding grounded theory" is an exceedingly deep and interesting, albeit

controversial, essay that presents a particular point of view about the value and use of this research methodology. Bryant argues that grounded theory method can provide valuable methodological support for interpretive research if it can be rescued from the “dubious legacy” of its positivist origins and from the slipshod implementation to which it has been put, as researchers use grounded theory to mean “anything goes.” Grounded theory method is suited to the support of interpretive research if researchers set aside its “scientific” beginnings and use it as the foundation of an effort to construct meaning through observation and social interaction.

This article is seriously provocative. Could it have been published in a traditional IS journal? Perhaps not, because the consensus-based review and acceptance process at traditional journals has the effect of eliminating controversial points of view. *JITTA* can publish papers that contain controversial points because its re-engineered review process gives editors more discretion to guide reviewers and to weigh the resulting reviews. In *JITTA*, I hope that we can publish more research essays, some of which (but not all, certainly) may be very controversial, but all of which will be substantial, well reasoned, and well worth reading.

Anekar and D’Incau, in “Value Creation in Mobile Commerce: Findings from a Consumer Survey,” investigate consumer intentions to use mobile commerce applications. In a broadly-based survey of the Finnish population, they try to ascertain whether consumers recognize potential value in m-services and try to determine whether m-commerce will actually increase the overall market for e-commerce, rather than to merely capture some of the e-commerce market for mobile devices. The paper develops a framework for research on mobile and wireless channels, identifies five generic value characteristics of mobile commerce applications, and uses consumer responses to questions about specific potential m-commerce services to investigate the perceived value of the characteristics.

Published now, this “research-report-on-first-results” paper, based on data collection done in the spring of 2001, is likely to make an important formative contribution to subsequent research in the area of m-commerce. Fortunately for these authors, *JITTA* can publish empirical research papers quickly. If this paper had gone through a traditional review and publication process with another IS research journal and had, consequently, been published several years later, it seems likely that its results, prospective in nature, might have been eclipsed by actual events, becoming substantially less interesting and valuable for the intended audience.

See-To and Xin, in “What Is Knowledge and the Technology to Support It Worth to the Firm,” review Chris Westland’s new book, *Valuing Technology: the New Science of Wealth in the Knowledge Economy*. The book develops concepts for understanding the value of firms with knowledge assets. Traditional financial accounting measures don’t serve this purpose well, so what should managers and researchers do about it?

*JITTA* would like to review interesting and consequential scholarly and professional books. We don’t have a book review editor, (although we might welcome one if someone wants to volunteer to perform this task) so we will depend on nominations from authors and potential reviewers for books to review.