Editorial: Trends in Management, Informatics and Research in a 21ˢᵗ Century Digitally Connected World

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*Alter*nation Special Edition 8 of 2013 contains fourteen contributions that report the results of research that focuses on interdisciplinary aspects of management and informatics. A number of the contributions focus on the research process itself. Each of the contributions addresses some facet of the integration of management and informatics in the 21ˢᵗ century digitally connected world in which we live.

Krishna K. Govender continues a research theme on service quality that he has written about in past issues of *Alter*nation, sometimes as co-author with fellow researchers, but here on his own. Govender reports the results of measuring service quality by means of data collected with an electronic survey instrument among a group of postgraduates and research supervisors in a leading research university in South Africa.

Sybilon Phetlhe and Theuns Pelser report the results of research on the factors that affect tourism SMMEs' ability to adopt ICT in the Ngaka Modiri Molema Distrct of the North West Province of South Africa. They conclude that factors such as the size of an enterprise, its location, knowledge among owners, improvement of business performance in terms of revenue and financial resources and initial ICT costs, all have an impact on ICT adoption by tourism enterprises.

Najeena Sha and Kantilal Bhowan report the results of their research into whether Generation Y consumers interact with brands through social media platforms, specifically social networking sites, or whether consumers predominantly use such sites for socialising and/or other purposes. They

identify four social networking sites that are predominantly used by Generation Y respondents and two distinct market segments, one favourably inclined towards commercial activities on social networking sites, and another one that is not quite supportive of such commercial activity.

Yougan Aungamuthu reports the results of research into using ICT as a tool to engage access students' academic identities in Mathematics. Aungamuthu concludes that ICT boosted participants' self-efficacy, giving students new actual and designated identities, and concludes with recommendations for curriculum designers in higher education.

Sonia Swanepoel, Nicolene Barkhuizen and Carver Pop report the results of research into the role of mentorship in the retention of graduate interns. Their results show that mentorship is statistically significantly related to the graduate intern's intention to quit a graduate internship programme. Results further show a significant relationship between the opportunity to apply mentorship skills and the mentor's intention to employ the graduate intern upon completion of the programme.

Lesley Stainbank reports that a change to the National Senior Certificate (NSC) in 2008 caused uncertainty about what the admission requirements into Faculties of Commerce should be since one of the main filters is the grade obtained for mathematics in the Senior Certificate. This prompted her research into the impact of NSC Mathematics on the performance of first year B Com General and B Com Accounting students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Stainbank concludes that performance in subjects of the B Com General and B Com Accounting programs is most strongly correlated with prior school mathematics performance.

Huibrecht M. van der Poll and Nicholas M. Ndwiga report the results of research on the role of Management Accounting in creating and sustaining a competitive advantage in the banking industry. Their research focusses on a leading commercial bank in Kenya whose rapid growth and competitiveness they attribute to the application of innovative management accounting practices. The authors conclude that management accounting practices provide both internal and external competitive strategies that enable business organisations to create and sustain a competitive advantage.

Bhavna Jugwanth and Debbie Vigar-Ellis report the results of their research into customer complaint behaviour and companies' recovery initiatives with focussing on companies' responses to customer complaints

published on the international Hellopeter customer service website. According to Jugwanth and Vigar-Ellis the most common online complaints on the Hellopeter website were regarding delays in company responses, companies promising action and failing to then act, and unhelpful company responses. Common recovery strategies used by organisations were offering to be in contact with the complainant and acknowledging the customers' complaint. Offering the customer an apology was also a frequently used recovery initiative. From the consumers who responded to the recovery initiative it was found that a relatively low percentage of complainants were impressed with the recovery outcome and process. The findings also indicate that consumers had the most positive responses when an apology was provided as well as a reference number for the consumer to track their complaint.

Reshma Subbaye and Mudaray Marimuthu report the results of their investigation into barriers to Internet adoption, focussing on small and micro enterprises in the business-services sector. The authors conclude that while SMEs acknowledged that the Internet is relevant to their businesses, they also identified the main barriers to Internet adoption as concerns about the costs and complexity, issues around security and lack of support, when it comes to using the Internet.

Nehemiah Mavetera, Simon Mukenge Tshinu and Sam Lubbe write on incorporating the best practices embodied in different ICT management frameworks such as ITIL and COBIT into business process development. Their research used a qualitative research process consiting of unstructured interviews to collect data. The results reveal that there is a need for effective, well developed and managed business processes in organisations active in competitive business environments.

Sanjay Ranjeeth, Ashley Marimuthu and Manoj Maharaj propose a pedagogical intervention based on agile software development methodology. A combined academic framework, consisting of behavioural science and design science theory, was used to operationalise acceptance of agile methodology. Information Systems & Technology students at the Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal were surveyed. The results indicate a high level of acceptance of agile methodology within the IS student community.

Kiru Pillay and Manoj Maharaj analyse the strategic use of Web 2.0

social media by civil society organisations. Their research led to the development of a model that has been statistically validated and subsequently modified, based on variables identified that naturally lend themselves to the generation of such a model.

Paulene Naidoo, Yasmin Rugbeer and Hemduth Rugbeer present the results of a comparative analysis of the role of intercultural communication in Japanese and South African intercontinental business ventures. The authors conclude that organisations could encapsulate a more intercultural and global environment and that advanced technology and the media are vital components of intercultural communication.

Rembrandt Klopper proposes a conceptual framework for tracking mobile communication technology trends during qualitative empirical analysis of online sources including e-documents, web sites, white papers, technical reports and visual materials such as video recordings. The framework identifies theoretical frameworks that could be appropriate for guiding empirical research and provides criteria that an appropriate framework should comply with.

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