

Preface

Working Groups 8.2 (scope: Development and use of information technologies in organizational contexts) and 8.6 (scope: diffusion and adoption of information technology) of The International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) have been very active. For example, the focus of the WG8.2 1996 working conference was *Information Technology and Changes in Organizational Work*; the 1997 working conference addressed issues related to *Information Systems and Qualitative Research*. The sister WG8.6 group met late in 1995 to discuss its title, *Diffusion and Adoption of Information Technology*; the 1997 working conference focused on *Facilitating Technology Transfer through Partnership*.

Since the dawn of the “organizational” computer age about 40 years ago, the claim that “success requires the marriage between human needs and information technology (IT) capabilities” has been commonly held. Recent advancements of theoretical understanding and the sharp increase in IT capabilities and utilization has forced us to realize that, in most cases, we have only paid lip service to the prerequisite. We also suspect that this marriage has been technology dominated. Even the term “marriage” may be inadequate. We might be closer to truth, and to all manner of relationships around the globe, if we talked about partnership. Now is the time for the reciprocal sharing, discussing, quarrelling, trusting, and compromising: the daily life in any sound and lasting relationship. Increasingly, we acknowledge that deep understanding of the interplay between people and technology is the basis for developing IT solutions that match organizational and individual needs.

The turn of the millennium has fueled our interest in constructing an opportunity to discuss present understanding and future directions and trends. Because their scopes differ—WG8.2 has a strong organizational/human focus and WG8.6 addresses the diffusion of IT—a joint working conference drawing on the expertise of both groups would create the best forum to discuss these issues and transfer, as it were, knowledge between working group members. The fact that the two working groups also substantially overlap in their theoretical and practical approaches increased our belief that a joint conference would offer common ground.

We take pleasure in having had a role in making this working conference happen. Our theme of “Information Systems: Current Issues and Future Changes” should give rich ground for discussion and debate, serve as guidance for good practice, and contribute to preparing us well for our future research efforts and working conferences.

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