Editor's Introduction

Building Information Systems Research Tradition in the Pacific Asia Region

This is the first issue of the *Pacific Asia Journal of Information Systems* (PAJAIS). It also indicates a new era of information systems (IS) research in the region. The development of IS research in Asia Pacific has gone through several stages. Prior to 1990, there were not many research activities in the region. Most schools were teaching-oriented and there was little cross-country sharing of knowledge.

Early milestones that triggered regional development were the publication of the *IS Faculty Directory* edited by Guy Gable and the *First Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS)* held at National Sun Yat-Sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan in 1993. A few journals targeted at local audience have been launched in different countries. For example, the *Journal of Information Management* in Taiwan (see *Journal Snapshot* in this issue) and *Australian Journal of Information Systems* were published around 1992. Unfortunately, a few attempts to develop a regional journal similar to the *European Journal of Information Systems* (EJIS) failed due to lack of publisher reputation or resources.

The research activities in the region did not stop, however. The rapid increase of the research requirements for faculty members and the recruitment of a substantial amount of well-educated faculty members to universities in the region have quickly built a fertile ground for scholastic activities. The establishment of the *Association for Information Systems* (AIS) and her international orientation also significantly facilitate the development of a regional academic platform. Over the years, researchers in the region have contributed substantially toward the advancement of knowledge in the area (see Hung, et al. in this issue) but many scholars in the region still have difficulties to publish their research findings in top journals (see Lin and Gregor in this issue). One possible reason is that research issues and methods of regional interests may not be of general interests to the journals residing outside the region. This can be seen from the substantially different focus between the European and American journals. PAJAIS is a response to such a demand on building a platform that can serve as a generally accepted high quality publication outlet for research findings related to the interest of the Asia Pacific Region.

Although the journal carries the title of "Pacific Asia," this does not mean that only research related to the region can be published in the journal. As an AIS journal, its goal is always to publish high quality and high impact papers. The regional flavor indicates that the journal will better reflect the nature of the information systems development in the region. For instance, information systems education in the region often stresses a proper integration of technical and managerial skills, which is different from the significant focus on managerial knowledge in North America. This is also evidenced by the high percentage of contributions from system-design related research in PACIS. Therefore, we would like to target the journal at the following goals:

1. **Publish high quality research papers in both design science and behavioral science.** Design and proper implementation of information systems are the dual cores of the information systems area. Without making contributions to the knowledge of system design, the whole area would be endangered. Each academic discipline needs to have a unique niche for knowledge accumulation and long-term survival. The niche is *money* for finance,

customer for marketing and *employee* for organizational behavior. For IS, the most important niche is *information technology*. Without making contribution to the knowledge in information system design is similar to without contribution to the understanding of customer decision process in marketing or without understanding portfolio design in finance. I just cannot image marketing scholars would leave the consumer behavior research to psychologists or finance scholars would leave portfolio design to mathematicians. Hence, PAJAIS welcomes both design science and behavioral science research.

2. **Facilitate new theory development and evaluation in the region.**
   The second objective of the journal is to encourage regional features in theory development and evaluation. As suggested in Lin and Gregor (2009) in this issue, theory development to internalize regional knowledge is particularly weak in the Pacific Asia. As we can find from Hung et al (2009) in this issue, the technology acceptance model (TAM) becomes the dominating (and probably the only) theory developed in the IS area. The theory is popular because of its parsimony and general applicability. The theory is nice and valuable, but it becomes harder and harder to justify the value of IS outside the area if the only theory we can tell others is TAM, which consists of two obvious constructs. The journal will focus more on creative theoretical development and research topics to serve as an incubator of new theories and innovative research directions. Evaluation of existing theories in different domains is another potential arena for theoretical innovation.

3. **Promote cross-cultural research in information systems**
   Culture is a tricky issue that most people consider it to be important but either exclude it in their research or treat it as an issue for future research. We have seen many cases where system failure was due to organizational or national culture, but not much has been done along this line. The area does not have a generally accepted framework to assess whether culture would play a more important role in certain issues and less important roles in the other. A better understanding of the interaction between culture and other theoretical variables may help improve our understanding of IS implementation in business. We do not have answers to the culture issue, but this is exactly the reason that we need more contributions.

There are many other important issues that we need to cover in the journal. For instance, IS research in Japan is less understood in the IS world because of the language barrier. Therefore, we will make effort to introduce research findings published in other languages to the international IS community by including a section called *Journal Snapshot* to introduce selected local journals in Asia Pacific and abstracts of papers publish in these journals.

Four articles are published in this issue. The first one by Lin and Gregor reports publication productivity of major authors in six IS journals and examines their geographical distribution. In addition to counting numbers, more and more universities also consider the impact of publication as measured by the citation frequency. The paper by Hung, et al. uses data collected from the *Web of Sciences* and *Google Scholar* to assess the most cited papers by Pacific Asian authors and their characteristics, such as theories used and year of publication. It provides a profile of major knowledge contribution from the region. The other two papers deal with network analysis. The paper by Chung proposes a visualization approach to stakeholder network information and shows a better performance on many performance indicators when it is compared with the traditional approach. The paper by Wang, et al. uses social network analysis to examine the knowledge network of IS researchers and finds that networks are effective for knowledge sharing, but the field can still make strides in building networks that enable combining diverse ideas into new ideas.

The publication of a new journal is not easy without the effort of many enthusiastic promoters. I would like to thank in particular those who have helped to make this journal an AIS publication: Rick Watson, Michael Myers, K.K. Wei, Philip Ein-Dor, Claudia Loebbecke, and many other council members who have supported the publication of such a journal. I also thank those on the PACIS Executive Committee who have helped frame the journal: Jae Kyu Lee, Guy Gable, Lihua Huang, Patrick Chau, Felix Tan, Chi-Ping Wei, Junichi Iijima and other members. I would also appreciate the support of AIS Staff and the Electronic Commerce Research Center of National Sun Yat-Sen University in Taiwan. Without the support of them, the publication of the journal would not have been possible.

This is the beginning of a regional flagship IS journal and we expect this to be the beginning of a new era of IS research in the Pacific Asia.

Ting-Peng Liang
Editor-in-Chief
Visiting Professor, City University of Hong Kong and
National Chair Professor, National Sun Yat-Sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan