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# Informatics Research Institute (IRIS) December 2003 newsletter

Rezgui, Y

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# IRIS NEWS

Issue 6: December 2003

The recent Government White Paper on Higher Education, the expected recommendations of the Roberts Report and the changes to the Research Quality Assessment funding formula have led to changes in University of Salford Research Policy.

This has led to some form of restructuring and expansion of our research institute with the creation of a new research centre, namely the Future Workspaces Research Centre, and the inclusion of the following research centers:

- Advanced Robotics Research Centre.
- Computer Science Research Centre.
- Centre for Networking and Telecommunication Research.

Given the research portfolio of the new members that provide a broad coverage of the hard / Computing dimension of the Information Systems discipline, it was decided that the name of the institute be changed to *Informatics Research Institute*, with the acronym IRIS.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new members. I hope that we will all be able to get our act together and work towards sustaining our high quality research.

Yacine Rezgui  
Director of IRIS

## Congratulations

Earlier in the year it was announced that PERMIS X.509 authorisation infrastructure, developed by Prof. David Chadwick and his team, was released as part of the US National Science Foundation Middleware Initiative. PERMIS is the first non-US software to make the Grid and Internet 2 software release.

[www.newswise.com/articles/2003/4/NMIR3.NSF.html](http://www.newswise.com/articles/2003/4/NMIR3.NSF.html)

To Ms Maria Burke on the launch of her new book, 'The Phenomenal Power of Business Intelligence: Managerial Skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.', and her new journal '*International Journal of Knowledge Science*', accepted for publication by Sage.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- New Publications
- New Research Projects
- New staff
- Postgraduate Research Student News
- Article by MPhil student, Mr. Joe Telles

## Who's doing what?

Prof. Alison Adam is to serve on the 2003-04 Programme Committee for ETHICOMP, Athens. She will also serve on the CATAC Programme Committee 2004, Stockholm.

Mr. Tom McMaster is a member on the Programme Committee of IFIP 8.6, Ireland 2004, and IFIP 8.2 UK 2004.

Gordon Fletcher is Joint Managing Editor of the Journal of Information and Society (JOSI).

Joanne Perrot has been recruited as the Research Secretary of IRIS.

## Publications

### Books:

Burke, M. 2003, 'The Phenomenal Power of Business Intelligence: Managerial Skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', London, Taylor and Francis.

### Book section:

Adam, A., 2003, 'Gender/body/machine', in *The Philosophy of the Body*, Proudfoot, M. (ed.), Blackwell Oxford.

Wilson F.A 2003, 'Systems Theory', *International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Routledge London.

## Journals:

Ball, E., Chadwick, D. & Otenko, O. 2003, 'Role-based Access Control with X.509 Attribute Certificates' *IEEE Internet Computing*.

Ball, E., Chadwick, D. & Mundy, D. 2003, 'Patient Privacy in Electronic Prescription Transfer' *Secure Systems, IEEE Security & Privacy*.

Chadwick, D., Mundy, D. & New, J. 2003, 'Experiences of Using a PKI to Access a Hospital Information System by High Street Opticians' *Computer Communications*, vol. 26.

Whatley, J. & Bell, F. 2003, 'Discussion Across Borders: Benefits for Collaborative Learning', *Educational Media International*, vol. 40.

Burke, M. 2003, 'Relationships Between Scalar Chains and Information Fulfillment: Towards a New Epistemology', *JASIST*.

Burke, M. 2003, 'Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Organization Structures as Information Processing Systems', *Journal of Documentation*, pp. 131-142.

Ferneley, E. & Berney, B. 2003, 'Internet Information Retrieval Using Collaboration Multi- User Agents' *Information Processing and Management*.

Fletcher, G., Greenhill, A. & Campbell, J. 2003, 'My Tribe Online', *Social Semiotics*.

Fletcher, G. 2003, 'Cargo Cults In Java: Virtual Objects In The Teaching And Learning Environment', *Journal of Information Technology Impact*.

Light, B. 2003, 'A Study of Organisational Experiences of CRM Packaged Software', *Business Process Management Journal*.

McMaster, T. & Hackney, R. 2003, 'Special Issue on Teaching Cases For IS Education', *Journal Of Information Systems Education* vol. 14.

Rezgui, Y., Bouchalghem, D., & Austin, S. 2003, 'An IT-Based Approach To Managing The Construction Brief' *International Journal of IT In Architecture, Engineering And Construction*, vol. 1.

Wilson, F.A. 2003, 'Area 51 Revised: The Implications Of Epistemological Relativism Within Information Systems Methodological Practice'. *Management Learning*, vol 34, no. 3.

## Conference Papers:

Adam, A. & Bell, F. 2003, 'Critical Information Systems Ethics', *3<sup>rd</sup> International Critical Management Studies Conference*, Lancaster, July 2003.

Adam, A. 2003, 'Hacking into Hacking: Gender and the Hacking Phenomenon', *Computer Ethics and Philosophical Enquiry*, Boston June 2003.

Basden, A. 2003, 'Levels of Guidance' and 'Guidelines and Freedom in Proximal User Interfaces', invited papers at *HCI International*, Crete, 2003.

Mirijamdotter A, Bergvall-Kareborn B Basden A " Reflection on a soft systems methodology technique for information systems design" *CPTS Working Conference* 2003.

Basden, A. & Burke, M. 2003, 'Towards A Philosophical Understanding Of Documentation' *Working Conference For Philosophy Technology and Social Systems*, Holland 2003.

Basden, A. 2003, 'Enriching Critical Theory', *CMS3 Critical Management Studies 3*, University Of Lancaster.

Bell, F. 2003, 'Framing E-Learning Communities within a Wider Context', *ALT-C 2003 Communities Of Practice*, Sheffield.

Whatley, J. & Bell, F. 2003, 'Can Students Benefit from Collaboration Across Borders?' *ICHE*, Portugal.

Briggs, N, 2003, 'Virtual Reality For SMEs', *E4sme*, June 2003.

Burke, M. 2003, Keynote Paper 'Sunbeams and Moonlight: Dancing Light Papers vs. Silver Blue Shadows – Managing Public Relations In Changing Information Infrastructures', *9<sup>th</sup> International Conference*, Poland.

Figueirdo, M. & Fernando, T. 2003, 'An Unified Framework to Solve the Broad And Narrow Phases of the Collision Detection Problem In Virtual Prototype Environments'. *GMG*.

Murray, N, Goulermas, Y. & Fernando, T. 2003, 'Optical Interfaces for Gesture Based Interaction', *HCII 2003*, Greece.

Murray, N. & Fernando, T. 2003, 'Development of an Immersive Assembly Environment', *VRAP 2003*, Portugal.

Sutcliffe, A., Gault, B., Fernando, T. & Tan, K. 2003, 'Comparing Interaction in the Real World and the CAVE Environment', *VRST 2003*.

Marcelino, L., Figueirdo, M. & Fernando, T. 2003, 'Surface Collision Detection for Maintenance Support in Virtual Environments', *ASCG 2003*.

Figueirdo, M. & Fernando, T. 2003, 'A Survey on Collision Detection Techniques for Virtual Environments', *SVR 2003*.

Ferneley, E., Berney, B., Cunningham, J. & Rezgui, Y. 2003, 'Bridging the Gap Between Social and Technical Processes to Facilitate IT Enabled Knowledge Dissemination', *ICEIS*, France, April 2003.

Ferneley, E., Lima, C. & Rezgui, Y. 2003, 'Interorganisational Semantic Webs to Enable Knowledge Discovery and Dissemination: Technical Support for the Social Process', *10<sup>th</sup> International Conference On Concurrent Engineering: Research And Application*, Madeira 2003.

McMaster, T., Kautz, K., Veryard, R., Curley, M. & Fichman, R. 2003, 'Ten Years On : Reflections on the Past and the Future of IFIP 8.6', *IFIP 8.6 International Working Conference*, Copenhagen 2003.

Mitra, A., Spedding, P. & Pennell, G. 2003, 'Issues and Dimensions of Successful IS Use: The Commonwealth Games at Manchester 2002', *UKAIS*, University of Warwick 2003.

## Conference Papers Cont/d...

Mitra, A. & Procter, C. 2003, 'Blending Learning in Practice', *Making Electronic Commerce Work for SME's*, Bolton Insitute 2003

Mitra, A. 2003, 'Orientations of Flexible Learning: Prospects and Challenges' *T&L Conference*, Salford 2003.

Richardson, H. 2003, 'CRM In Call Centres: The Logic of Practice', *IFIP 8.2/9.4 ISGLOB Conference*, June 2003

Rae, J. & Taylor, G. 2003, 'Learning Through E-Reflection: Desires and Designs', *Education in a Changing Environment*, Salford 2003.

Rezgui, Y., Wetherill, M. & Ferneley, E. 2003, 'A Distributed Knowledge Management Architecture for the Construction Industry', *IEPM03*.

Rezgui, Y., Zarli, A., Bohms, M. and Hannus, M. A Strategic Roadmap for the Construction Sector, 10th ISPE International Conference on Concurrent Engineering: Research and

Applications, Madeira Island - Portugal, 26 - 30 July, 2003. ISBN 90-5809-622-X.

Whatley, J. 2003, 'An Agent System to Support Student Teams Working Online', *Informing Science And IT Education*, Finland 2003.

Wilson, F.A & Sharifi, S. 2003, 'Self-Referential Systems as a Metaphor for the Virtual Organization', *Proceeding Of The British Academy Of Management Conerence 2003*.

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## New Projects

**Prof. Alison Adam and Ms Helen Richarchson** have been awarded two European Social Fund (ESF) projects:

Project 1: Regional ESF Project - Women in the IT Industry in the North West

Project 2: National ESF Project – Women and IT

These projects will undertake an in-depth survey of women in the IT industry in the Northwest and compare this to national data. It will investigate why women are poorly represented in the IT sector as a whole, in particular senior levels, and also causes of the 'female IT brain-drain'.

**Ms Janice Whatley and Ms Frances Bell** have secured funding for a European MINERVA project entitled 'Callaboration Across Borders (CAB)'. This venture is being undertaken by a partnership of six institutions across Europe, helped by a grant of almost 300000 Euro over two years. Salford is the co-ordinating Institution.

The CAB Project involves developing a web site to enable teachers to identify student groups anywhere in Europe who are willing to collaborate with their students in a short collaborative activity. We are going to investigate whether this collaboration enhances the learning experience of students, by encouraging discussion using online tools, also enabling cultural exchange, without the need to travel. The part played by learning strategies and emotions will also be studied.

**Prof. Ruth Aylett** has been awarded funding form EU Asia-Europe IT&C 'Empathic Learning with Virtual Interactive Synthetic Characters'. She has also been awarded funding from ESA for a 6 month project 'On Board Interactive Planning and Scheduling in Space'.

**Prof. David Chadwick** has been funded by JISC to integrate PERMIS, his authorisation infrastructure, into the Globus Toolkit release 3. Globus is the primary software used by all UK e-Science Grid applications. Once this integration has been achieved PERMIS will be in a prime position to be used by many grids the whole world over. The title of the research is 'Grid Authorisation API phase 2 and will last until March 2004.

He also been awarded a European 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Integrated Project, 'Trustcom'.

Prof. David Chadwick has received EPSRC funding for his Programmable Networks proposal.

**Prof Yacine Rezgui** has secured funding for two projects, (a) FUNSIEC funded by the eContent programme to study the feasibility of developing a European eCommerce platform in the Construction sector, and, (b) VE-Forum a specific support action funded under the FP6 programme to provide an integrating portal for all researchers and professionals in the domain of networked businesses and governments in Europe and internationally.

## Completed Projects



eCognos was a 3 year EU funded project to examine the nature of knowledge transfer within and between construction companies. The aim of the aim of the project was to develop a web services based knowledge management portal which allowed the contents of a variety of proprietary and bespoke applications to be abstracted into a common representation for subsequent interrogation and exploitation. The model attempted to mirror the social process of information retrieval - the notion of 'ask a friend', then ask a more 'knowledgeable friend' before finally consulting external information sources. The project was driven by the industrial partners' commercial requirements, the ISI were tasked with implementing those requirements by developing a scalable, commercially robust knowledge management portal. Thanks to the efforts of James Cunningham, Matt Wetherill and Brendan Berney we developed the e-CKMI - the eCognos Knowledge Management Infrastructure. The project passed its final review with the commission at the end of September with flying colours. Now the aim is to continue the development of the technology in other research council and commercial funding endeavours.

## New Staff

### DR. ELENA ZAITSEVA

Dr. Elena Zaitseva will be working as a Research Assistant on the MINERVA CAB project. Elena previously worked in Russia as a researcher in the area of Open and Distance Learning. She has organized a number of Russian-Japanese international educational projects for secondary school pupils and university students aimed at multi-cultural, multi-language education. Elena's PhD is in Educational Technology, obtained from Moscow People Friendship University, Russia.

*New Staff Cont/d...*

### MR. PETER LANGLEY

Peter Langley is a PhD research student, supervised by Prof. Chadwick. sponsored by Nexor Ltd. His research topic is 'Role Based Secure Messaging'. Peter graduated from Salford in July 2003 with a BSc (Hons) Information Technology. Peter also has a Mechanical Engineering degree, conferred by Salford in 1971.

## GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

### MR. ALEXEIS GARCIA PEREZ

Alexeis has been awarded a University of Salford GTA Scholarship to conduct his PhD research in the area of 'Knowledge Management and Open Publishing', under the supervision of Prof. Grahame Cooper. His first degree in Computer Sciences was from the University of Havana in 1996. He then became a lecturer in the Department of Librarianship and Information Sciences of the same university. There he taught ICT for Information Management to undergraduate and postgraduate students for 6 years. He completed an MSc in Librarianship and Information Sciences at the University of Havana in 2002, and with a grant from the Chevening Scholarship offered by the British Council, he came to the UK to do an MSc in Information Management at Manchester Metropolitan University.

### MR. ANDREW SCHOFIELD

Andrew is a recipient of a University of Salford GTA Scholarship to conduct his PhD research in the area of 'Resource Sharing in Open-source Environments', under the supervision of Dr. Mitra.

Mr. Schofield graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Computer Science and Information Systems course in the School of Sciences, at Salford. He has an MSc in Managing Information Technology from the Information Systems Institute. Whilst studying for my MSc, he worked as a teaching assistant for the Advanced Databases module, assisting students with their lab work and teaching them the Oracle database system and SQL.



### ALEKSEJ HEINZE

Aleksej's is an ESF Graduate Teaching Assistant, under the supervision of Chris Procter. His PhD topic is 'Future of Higher Education – Blended Learning'.



### HELEN FERRIS

Helen is an ESF Graduate Teaching Assistant. She is also studying for an MSc in Managing Information Technology in the ISI.

## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

### New Postgraduate Research Students

Ms. Johria Norfizlina (Fizlin) ISMAIL, MSc  
(Supervisor: Prof. Aylett), April 2003

Mr. David McWHINNIE, MPhil  
(Supervisor: Dr. Ferneley), April 2003

Ms. Rachael MURPHY, MPhil  
(Supervisor: Mr. M. Jones), April 2003

Ms. Polly SOBREPerez, PhD  
(Supervisor: Dr. Ferneley), July 2003

Ms. Lisa WORRALL, PhD  
(Supervisor: Ms. Bell) July 2003

Mr. Hamed AL-HAJRI, PhD  
(Supervisor: Prof. Rezgui), October 2003

Mr. Robert APSIN, PhD  
(Supervisor Prof. Fernando), October 2003

Mr. Athman Ahmed ATHMAN, PhD  
(Supervisor: Dr. Mitra) October 2003

Mr. Alexeis GARCIA-PEREZ, PhD  
(Supervisor: Prof. Cooper), October 2003

Mr. Alex HEINZE, PhD  
(Supervisor: Mr. Procter), October 2003

Mr. Chen-hung (Max) HO, PhD  
(Supervisor: Prof. Fernando) October 2003

Ms. Lucy KYLE, MPhil  
(Supervisor: Ms. Bell), October 2003

### ***New Postgraduate Students Cont/d...***

Mr. Peter LANGLEY, PhD  
(Supervisor: Prof. Chadwick) October 2003

Ms. Mei Yii LIM, PhD  
(Supervisor: Prof. Aylett) October 2003

Ms. Naomi PEMBERTON-BILLING, MSc  
(Supervisor: Prof. Fernando), October 2003

Mr. Raja Ahmad Iskandar RAJA YAACOB, PhD  
(Supervisor: Dr. Campoy-Gomez) October 2003

Ms. Sarina Maria SAIGER  
(Supervisor: Ms. Richardson) October 2003

Mr. Andrew SCHOFIELD, PhD  
(Supervisor: Dr. Mitra) October 2003

Mr. Martin Anthony SMITH, MSc  
(Supervisor: Prof. Fernando) October 2003

Mr. Robert STONE, MSc  
(Supervisor: Prof. Fernando) October 2003

Mr. Gary TAYLOR, PhD  
(Supervisor: Dr. Rae) October 2003

Mr. Joseph TELLES, MPhil  
(Supervisor: Ms. Richardson) Oct 2003

Paul Spedding and Chris Procter are co-organising an LTSN Event

### **Work Based Learning in Information & Computer Sciences**, at the University of Salford on 23 January 2004.

The Work Based Learning event aims to address the practicalities of this approach to learning in terms of managing, assessing and supporting 'off campus' students. It will also tackle the issue of delivering the curriculum in the work place as well as reflective practice and personal development planning. In addition the event will highlight the importance of student employability and what employers may require from HE institutions in order to cooperate in the WBL strategy.

To obtain more information on this event, please consult <http://www.ics.ltsn.ac.uk/events/wbl/>

### **Research Newsletter Submissions:**

The next issue of the IRIS Newsletter will be published in March 2004.

Submissions to the Newsletter must be sent to Joanne Perrott at-mail: [j.e.perrott@salford.ac.uk](mailto:j.e.perrott@salford.ac.uk) by **7<sup>th</sup> February 2004**.

## **Graduated Postgraduate Research Students**

BERNEY Brendan, PhD  
(Supervisor: E Ferneley)  
Exploration Of Social Information Seeking In Knowledge Management With The Socialiser Engine, A Software Tool Supporting Information Seeking Behaviour.

BRIZLAND Ray  
(Supervisor: B. Wood)

IQBAL Javed  
(Supervisor: T. Wood-Harper)  
Learning From The Radical Change Initiative In British Aerospace, Military Aircraft

LIGHT Ben  
(Supervisor: T Wood-Harper)  
An Interpretive Field Study Of Packaged Software Selection Processes

NOLAN Terry  
(Supervisor: B Wood)  
Virtuality, Community And Individuality: Developing New Insights Into Learning And Knowledge In The Small Business

WILSON Ian  
(Supervisor: Y Rezgui)  
Digitally Enabling The Construction Virtual Enterprise

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Having recently embarked on the process of further study for an MPhil and progression to PhD status, I was accosted by a close friend who, in all seriousness, thought I'd lost the plot.

"But why?", she asked, "Why put yourself through another two years or more of that sort of stress? Just to be able to put a few letters on the end of your e-mail and chequebook?"

My friend's question, so innocently asked, actually made me stop and take stock of the path I am on.

If it was for prestige or recognition then any position I took with the research would invariably be tainted by some attempt to appeal to or placate a specific interest group.

This statement in itself might raise a few eyebrows, so I'll explain.

A few years back I completed an Honours degree Dissertation looking at IT Skills provision within Private, Public and Education sectors.

In the case of a High School case study, there was a significant discrepancy between the perceived skills of white English and non-white English students.

At the time I considered this nothing more than an interesting anomaly with potential links to Peter Senker's theory linking achievement to overcoming stereotypes and the more distasteful attitudes expressed by some groups in society.

But the growing trend to outsourcing in Industry, especially of software and call centre work to India, that the Indian Tata Group generates over \$11 Billion in revenue, that the Indian Government has a dedicated Ministry of Technology and that small Indian villages are able to wirelessly access Government officials and services weekly, made me reconsider.

How often do you or I access Government Services or Officials, wirelessly or otherwise? It's a rhetorical question, but you begin to see my point.

Despite the view of a developed West and a still-developing East, it is increasingly the case that our society appears to be developing, struggling with the roll out of such "E-enabled" services and access points.

But the question is "Why do some groups adopt and embrace technology quicker than others?"

This line of thought gave rise to a second cause for reticence. Notwithstanding that the software industry is highly skilled, would I be inadvertently promoting the disquieting notion that one race or ethnic group are better suited to a particular industry or type of job? That thought un-nerved me for many personal reasons.

Generalisations of or discussions of ethnic/race issues are fraught with dangers of causing offence, a 'hot potato' if you will.

Yet I find myself inexorably drawn to discussing these apparent trends and the fundamental reasons that underpin them, a beguilingly simple explanation of Culture. This opens up a whole host of interesting theories about what influences culture, how far individuals are influenced by culture in their attitudes, interactions and development and whether such cultural influences extend beyond nominal boundaries such as geography and time without substantial changes to the core concepts.

Why am I doing this? Because I need to know.

*Joe Telles*

*MPhil Student*