Welcome to our special issue featuring IS research from China! This is an exciting advancement for Data Base, as we move forward with featuring the finest research produced by our colleagues in the Chinese Association for Information Systems, under the able guidance of Global Co-Editor Patrick Chau.

While not specifically an internationally-themed publication, an important part of Data Base's mission is the service of the academic discipline for Management Information Systems, worldwide. As part of this, our editorial board, our contributors, and our published articles reflect a growing international aspect of focus. In a field characterized by globally-diffused Information and Communications Technology, Information Systems is worldwide in its coverage, impact and implication. This special issue is simply part of the expanded global mission of Data Base as we seek to serve colleagues in increasingly important yet more geographically removed portions of the world - at least as compared to our North American locale. For, it seems that as we move into the wired and global century, our empirical practice is where we find it, in important emerging economies and developing nations - indeed, in the coming advanced nations of the rest of the world. Among these is China; there are numerous others, and we will turn our focus to them, as well, in due course. Our focus in this issue is the work our colleagues in the Chinese Association for Information Systems have been doing, and we are particularly pleased to be bringing it to you.

There are differences in the ways that Chinese customers use auction Web sites and the ways in which American customers use auction sites. In our first article for this special issue, Ye et al., point out that there have been few if any cross-cultural comparisons between US and Chinese eCommerce customers. For instance, they observe that Buy-It-Now pricing is the predominant pricing model for Chinese online Customer-to-Customer auctions. This is a distinct difference from the auction model Americans seem to favor, where the competitive high bidder wins the purchase. Not only are there interesting cultural implications to explore in this difference between two major online societies, but key mechanisms of the online auction process probably operate differently, as a result. Ye et al. specifically investigate reputational effects of sellers in fixed-price Buy-It-Now auctions on a major Chinese auction site. Although some results of the study are predictable - negative reputations reduce sales while positive reputations increase sales - the cross-cultural subtleties arise in the implications of the findings. There are aspects of fixed price auctions models that require specific understanding of the nature of Chinese online customers. We begin to close the gap of knowledge and understanding in this important online market when our knowledge of how things work in our Western context is subjected to confirmation and investigation in the emerging Eastern context.

As early as 1973, Richard Nolan suggested that IT expenditures progressed in specific stages characterized by heavy growth in spending on new technologies up to the point that management became concerned with return on investment and control issues, at which point investment decelerated and eventually plateaued at an integrative stage when technology expenditures reached a mature level. This spending process was theorized to follow a characteristic "S-shaped" curve, with middle stages of heavy spending, followed by a leveling effect. Reimers, Guo and Chen suggest here in our second featured article that this stage hypothesis may not apply in every circumstance, based on a multi-year study of Chinese firms. Interestingly, the stages appear to cohere in some large Chinese firms. Their results tend to support the notion that that Nolan stage hypothesis does not pertain in regards to learning processes in the "S-Curve" effect so much as it does in terms of standard diffusion curve effects.

In our third article, Yang and Wang investigate Chinese online consumers and their concerns for privacy, as may impact behavioral intentions to make online purchases and seek jobs at online recruitment sites. In contrasting information sensitivity with the possibility of compensation for disclosure of personal information, the authors find that Chinese consumers are understandably reluctant to divulge potentially sensitive personal information, but can be influenced to do so through the judicious application of discounts. The level of discount necessary to overcome consumers' privacy concerns varies by context, though there is an indication that levels in the range of 30% might be required in some situations. Given what we know and are in process of learning about the nature of the Chinese online marketplace, these findings

provide a very useful departure point for further research into an important area of inquiry in this critical global market.

Lastly, Qiu and Li offer the idea that the way that end users think about corporate strategic factors and the way in which they consider information system flexibility as regards their systems use in strategic contexts is different. This hypothesis is expressed in the notion that high systems flexibility provides for quicker responses to environmental events and a better ability to adapt to change, as juxtaposed against the benefits of integration of overall enterprise data the efficiencies this integration provides to decision makers - something they characterize as information resource visibility. The two capabilities potentially interact, in which increased flexibility leads to greater degrees of complexity, which, in turn might reduce the ability to integrate data. High flexibility could result in low visibility, in other words. In a study of Taiwanese firms, the authors demonstrate that the role that end users play in the achievement of corporate strategies is critical, in the sense that systems support of corporate strategy requires systems users to understand corporate strategy, typically.

We hope you enjoy this fresh look at emerging scholarship on emergent markets. Chinese colleagues are making important contributions to the understanding of Management Information Systems both in their own cultural context, and in the context of the emerging global market. Though cultural differences will generally continue to provide interesting challenges for understanding and working with colleagues and customers in diverse and dispersed locations in this global market, our research perspectives increasing integrate cross-cultural views in ways that permit us to integrate our business practices, as well. In the service of Management Information Systems, worldwide, and in the interests of the emerging global economy, we're doing our part here at Data Base. See you next time with more interesting global perspectives!

Tom Stafford, *Editor*

Patrick Y.K. Chau, *Global Co-Editor*

Editorial offices:

MIS Department

The Fogelman College of Business and Economics

University of Memphis, Memphis, TN 38152, USA

<http://the-database.org>