

Editorial

Is there a future for informatics research? A strategy for the 21st century

*A Cranfield conference in honour of Jack Meadows
June 28th and 29th 1999, Held at the Conference Centre, Cranfield University,
Cranfield MK43 0AL, UK*

This issue will be used as a kind of “conference proceedings” for the Cranfield meeting discussed below. Journals have certain advantages over proceedings, but publication speed is not one of them so we are increasing it in various ways. For instance proofs are not being sent to authors – a notorious reason for delays – they are being read at this office. I accept responsibility for ensuring that short cuts do not affect the quality of this publication. I am informed by the publisher (July 29th 1999) that copies of this issue should arrive in the UK by mid-October – fast for a journal.

“Cranfield Conferences” in the informatics field as they were always called, used to be arranged by Cyril Cleverdon – a major information science pioneer and librarian at the College of Aeronautics. The college has become Cranfield University so it was fitting that this Cranfield Conference entitled “Is there a future for informatics research? A strategy for the 21st century” should be held there. It took place on the 28th and 29th of June 1999. The conference was held in honour of Jack Meadows so this “conference proceedings”, with the papers printed in the order in which they were delivered, is also really a festchrift for Jack. The affection for Jack Meadows in the profession comes across in the papers – several authors describe personal experiences showing how highly he is regarded.

About 70 delegates were invited to this international occasion – efficiently organised by the University librarian Dr Hazell Woodward and her capable assistant Norma Cunningham, Helen Henderson, consultant, and Fytton Rowland from Loughborough. It was arranged in several sessions – Scientific Journalism, Information Technology, The National Library, Information Policy and Scholarly Scientific Publishing. The delegates and the authors were experienced, often eminent, people from academe, publishing companies and other information oriented organisations.

“Informatics” seems to imply some kind of “socio-technology” – applications of information technology to economic, social and political development, or perhaps a *study* of the impact of information and communication technology on society. Whatever its meaning, the organisers invited the right people. The speakers delivered a diverse and most interesting collection of papers. When is the next Cranfield Conference?

Tony Cawkell
Editor