Letter from the Editor

After twenty years, the Journal of Information Technology for Development is now in its third phase of life. It went from being an academic Journal (1983–1993) when it was published by Oxford University Press and became practitioner oriented when publication was taken over by IOS Press and funding was obtained for it by IDRC and the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993–2003). During that period the Journal published a diversity of papers and also suffered some hiccups. I was invited to serve as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal in March 2003. My immediate task was to revamp the Editorial Board and then work towards increasing the reputation of the Journal. The challenge we are faced with now is to increase the academic quality of the Journal while maintaining its relevance to practioners, managers and policy makers.

This is no small challenge. The field has moved forward and research should reflect this. The concept of Development is no longer confined within the boundaries of developing countries but has become important for more developed economies seeking to develop links with other economies. While Information Technology (IT) cannot be seen to alleviate the problems of developing and developed economies, it can enable asymmetries to be overcome when judiciously implemented to support local needs. The contribution of IT for Development lies in research that provides insight into immediate issues such as global sourcing strategies and banking in addition to traditional issues such as sustainability. The Journal is soliciting papers for two special issues in both these areas: "Offshore Sourcing Strategies in Developing Nations" and "IT Penetration in the Banking Sector in Developing Nations".

Members of the new Editorial Board bring with them a wealth of experience and expertise. The Journal now draws upon accomplished academics in information systems, government, policy and planning, and practioners who are active in IT Policy and development efforts. These members of the editorial board are making their contribution to the Journal by providing insightful, critical and constructive reviews on papers submitted to the Journal. The few papers that have since been accepted reflect their efforts to increase the quality of this Journal.

The Dean of the College of Information Science and Technology of the University of Nebraska Omaha, David Hinton, has ensured that the Journal's new editorial office has all the resources it needs to function effectively and efficiently. The Journal's new Editorial Assistant, Suzanne Pukall-Smith, brings to the Journal many years of organisational experience at the office of the dean at the College of Information Science and Technology. She is the first point of contact for authors who submit papers to the Journal and tirelessly follows up on pending reviews.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues this year to be committed to supporting and advancing the Journal. The Commonwealth Network of Information Technology for Development (COMNET-IT) represents key audiences in International Agencies and practioners in IT policy and development. Henry Alamango, the managing editor of the Journal, is also the Executive Director of COMNET-IT. His role is to promote and profile the Journal amongst the international organisations and governments with which COMNET-IT is active.

Authors and researchers whose work is published in the Journal expect their work to be accessible to a wide and relevant audience. Mechanisms for distributing the Journal reflect this. The Journal is available through electronic library systems such as EBSCO, and ABI Proquest. Subscription is handled through subscription agents in western Europe and North America. The Commonwealth Secretariat and

COMNET-IT attempt to buy and distribute as many copies of the Journal in Developing Countries as they can.

Papers submitted to the Journal are screened for relevance to the Journal, methodological proficiency, and basic knowledge. Papers that pass the initial screening will be sent for review. I am responsible for the initial screening and I appoint Editorial Board members for review. The Associate Editors, to whom I assign papers requiring revisions, guide the authors through their revisions and make the final decision on the papers. The review process aims to provide authors with constructive feedback so that their research may be improved for publication in the Journal. The submission and review process is electronic and is handled here at the College of Information Science and Technology at the University of Nebraska Omaha. My objective is to have the Journal qualify for the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI).

The stage is now set. Together we can develop the Journal of Information Technology for Development into a high ranking publication.

Sajda Qureshi
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Information Technology for Development