Editorial

Nandish V. Patel

This special issue concerns the adaptive and evolutionary conceptions of and methods for developing systems for information and knowledge management in organised human activity. Adaptive and evolutionary systems enable both developers and so-called 'users' to change systems functionality. There are various themes in this increasingly important field. Nandish Patel proposes the *Theory of Deferred Action* for designing sustainable Knowledge Management Systems capable of catering for explicit, emergent and tacit knowledge, and proposes some systems analysis techniques based on Conversation Analysis.

Jon Dron's '*Epimethean Information Systems*' for learning are not *designed* in the conventional sense, but take their shape in response to the actions of the people that use them. They share a range of characteristics, including implicit communication between users, emergent structure, and self-organisation.

Both Patel's and Dron's papers attempt to reconceptualise so-called 'users' as actual developers of systems. Such systems are required because of the changing nature of organisation, which are now increasingly being characterised as 'emergent' and 'changing', and therefore 'users' requirements' are constantly changing, too.

Anya Sotiropoulou and Dimitrios Theotokis explore how organisational members can tailor information systems. They employ service-oriented techniques for tailorable information systems, presenting a particular approach to service-oriented development using soft systems methodology.

George Ghinea *et al*. explore an integrated architecture for new generation of network communication architectures that makes use of the objective-technical information provided by the designer and the Quality of Perception metric for intelligent decision making in the construction of user-centred adaptable communication protocols.

Carl Adams attempts to determine through a case study how systems development teams can address evolving requirements in dynamic business environments. He identifies structures that support such system evolution.

Tony Elliman and July Eatock examine how to determine what design decisions to defer and how they should be presented to the 'user' in *any* legal arbitration case. For them, flexible system design requires a different mindset that keeps these design choices open until the system is in use.

This collection of papers addresses the important recent development of an amethodological approach to conceptions of systems and their development. The conception of systems and their development will remain.