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Special Issue on the AMCIS 2001 Workshops: Introduction

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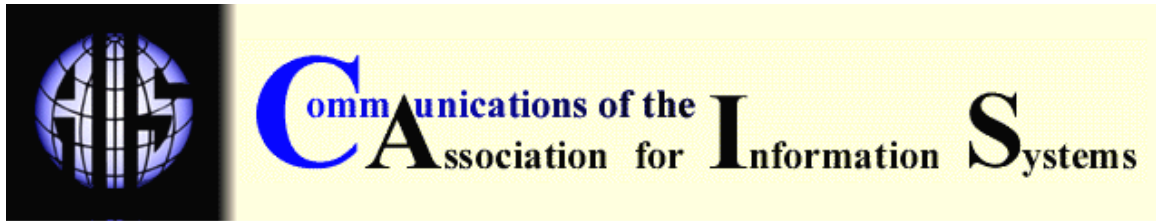
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SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE AMCIS 2001 WORKSHOPS: INTRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the CAIS special issue on the workshops presented at AMCIS 2001 in Boston, MA. The overriding theme of this issue deals with various aspects of teaching with technology in the information systems curriculum using commercial applications as well as cases developed by faculty. These aspects include challenges of integrating large-scale applications with limited resources, system design configurations, and pedagogical issues. This paper provides an overview of each of the articles in this issue.

KEYWORDS: teaching, technology, workshops, special

I. HISTORY OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

Each year the AMCIS conference sponsors pre-conference activities, including doctoral consortia, the MIS camp for faculty, and workshops. In 2001 the workshops were held the day prior to the conference. Traditionally, workshops provide an opportunity to demonstrate concepts, participate in discussions, provide hands-on access, and practice techniques. Each workshop was three hours long to provide sufficient time for in-depth and often hands-on learning by the attendees.

Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts, host of AMCIS 2001, has a long history of technology use in its curriculum and as workshops chair, I was given the opportunity to host the workshops at Bentley so that participants could share ideas using its state-of-the-art academic technology facilities. Of the six workshops, four involved hands-on sessions held at Bentley College during the afternoon and two were held at the conference hotel in Boston during the morning.

Unlike the paper sessions and panels, whose content is included in the conference proceedings, the information and value gained from the workshops is not recorded – until now. The editor of CAIS provided me the opportunity to edit this special issue and share with the IS community curriculum and pedagogical issues of this year's workshops. The articles presented here detail and/or expand on the content of the workshops. The next section presents a brief description of the workshops and their contribution.

II. CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

To open this issue and to see how one school approaches curricular technology integration, the first article discusses Bentley College's venture into teaching with technology, leveraging their

infrastructure to change *how and what* they teach. Bentley has long been recognized by for its strategic and innovative use of technology to serve students and faculty (Bentley, 2001). The next three articles introduce students to the methodologies that constitute information systems development practices. Of these, two discuss specific applications of commercial products (Oracle and Visible Analyst Workbench) and the third the application of faculty-developed cases for IS courses. The fifth article gives an extensive overview of integrating enterprise systems into the IS curriculum, in particular SAP/R3. The article details the challenges and available resources for this technology. The last article in this issue discusses a technology, speech-enabled information systems, which is increasingly being applied in a number of home and commercial settings, posing both IS research and business issues. As Hars' title implies, this technology is truly the next frontier but it is not yet being taught extensively in IS curricula.

ARTICLE 1 –A THREE-LEVEL APPROACH TO STRATEGICALLY MANAGING CURRICULAR TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION BY PHILLIP KNUTEL

The first half of this workshop provided a “speed”–walking tour (due to time limitations) of Bentley’s discipline-specific specialty labs including its nationally recognized Trading Room. This tour gave participants a first-hand look at how a business school integrates technology into core business functions such as finance, marketing, and accounting, while incorporating the global and cultural aspects of business. The second half of the workshop examined two specific technologies that Bentley uses to support *how* faculty teach about technology – Blackboard and Centra Symposium, for asynchronous and synchronous web-based courses, respectively. Benefits of this workshop included not only a view of integrating technology in curricula, but also a peek into the challenges of strategically managing such an integration.

ARTICLE 2 – DEMONSTRATING THE DATABASE CLIENT ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ORACLE DEVELOPER MARY ANN ROBERT

This workshop is of value to database faculty who are currently using a database management system to teach database concepts or those faculty who plan to teach a database course. Of the commercial database products available, Oracle is used by several faculty in undergraduate and graduate database courses [Morrison and Morrison, 2001]. Oracle’s Enterprise software includes several utilities – Developer, Designer, SQL Plus, JDeveloper, and Enterprise Manager –used in academic courses. Noting that Oracle is difficult to administer and the learning curve is steep, the author (a ten-year veteran of using Oracle in the classroom) discusses an optimal configuration for Oracle Developer, how Developer can be used to attain course objectives, some examples for student projects, and resources for faculty.

ARTICLE 3 – BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS MODELING WITH CASE SOFTWARE BY SATYA PRAKASH SARASWAT

This workshop presented a faculty-developed case that uses a CASE tool, Visible Analyst Workbench (VAW), to teach the fundamentals of systems analysis and design. This case is used in a specialized half-semester course that is taken as a pre- or co-requisite to the Analysis and Modeling course in the IS curriculum at Auburn. Short courses such as these are key in curriculum development and necessary to teach specialized business skills and techniques which do not require a student an entire semester’s to become proficient. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of using VAW as viewed by workshop participants is detailed in the article. The author makes available the case, the detailed project requirements and solutions, and other resources for faculty.

ARTICLE 4 – BRINGING REAL WORLD ISSUES INTO CLASSROOMS: AN INNOVATIVE MULTI-MEDIA CASE STUDY APPROACH BY CHETAN SANKAR AND P.K. RAJU

The authors demonstrate the use of multimedia case studies developed to integrate business skills with technical knowledge while, at the same time, emphasizing decision-making skills and teamwork. This research was part of a National Science Foundation grant to develop innovative teaching materials using technology. The article includes a discussion of the similarities and differences between traditional and multimedia case studies. Research results

compare the use of this teaching methodology based on gender, ethnicity, and major. A summary of the cases developed is included, as is the instrument used to assess the value of the methodology.

ARTICLE 5 – INTEGRATING ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS IN THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM BY MICHAEL ROSEMAN AND EDWARD WATSON

The integration of enterprise systems (ES) into any curriculum is a daunting task. The resources required are costly in terms of personnel, time, and capital. The authors share their wealth of knowledge and expertise of enterprise systems in general and of SAP/R3 in particular, detailing in the article the characteristics and challenges of ES. They offer an excellent overview of how the various components of an ES can be incorporated into an IS course – as a repository, a simulation tool, an implementation tool, an enterprise modeling tool, as a development environment, and as an administrator environment – since it is difficult, if not impossible, to realize the depth and breadth of such a system in one course. In addition, the authors discuss the resources available through the SAP University Alliance – software, training, professional development, curriculum awards, and research funding. Faculty who are embarking on ES integration, as well as those who are further into the process, will find valuable information and lessons based on the various approaches for curricula integration.

ARTICLE 6 – SPEECH ENABLED INFORMATION SYSTEMS – THE NEXT FRONTIER BY ALEXANDER HARS

This workshop presented an overview of speech-enabled information systems, which are increasingly being used for applications of speech recognition such as medical dictation, inventory management, and voice authentication. The author also provides information for online demonstrations by some of the leading vendors of speech synthesis, another major component of speech technologies. Most of the research to date involving this technology is from a technical or computer science perspective. Readers get a glimpse of what is on the horizon as Hars discusses research challenges from a business and IS perspective, including user interface design, business process redesign, business models, and the social implications of developing and using this technology.

III. CONCLUSION

The rapid development of technology and technology use forever changed the way we live, work, and learn, and the academy is continually challenged to find ways to incorporate and managed technology integration in the curricula. The collection of articles in this issue explores aspects of faculty responses to the demand for teaching with technology, as well as business and research issues of this agenda. The topics are timely and important to both scholars and practitioners, alike. I thank the presenters for sharing their expertise and practices, and I invite you to read and enjoy this issue.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sharon D. White, the author of this Introduction, served as the Editor of the Special Issue on the AMCIS2001 Workshops as well as being responsible for coordinating the Workshops themselves. Her excellent work in assembling and editing this series is greatly appreciated.

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Sharon D. White is Assistant Professor of MIS at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, NC. She received her Ph.D. in Management Information Systems and MBA from Florida State University, and a BA in Computer Science from the University of Georgia. Her research interests include computer supported collaborative work, the social, ethical, and economic impacts of IT adoption and diffusion, and teaching with technology

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