

Letter from the Editor

Who said starting an on-line journal in Science and Technology is a trivial matter? When there are so many journals already, why start a new one? Furthermore, why start a journal in Latin America? And we can go on and on asking ourselves questions and trying to convince ourselves that it is better to do something else. If we can contribute with R&D results in Information Technology (IT), with our grain of sand to the worldwide scientific community, we have made a difference. For instance, the USA contributes 35% of all scientific publications where Brazil, the largest contributor of the region, is only 0.47%. If we can help modify this distribution of scientific contributions in any fashion, we will have made a difference.

We find ourselves in the middle on a new Renaissance, once again going from centralized systems to distributed ones. That is, we are moving to a world with distributed intelligence where the concepts of time and distance have disappeared. This is true in all areas, from politics and economics to education and engineering. Information Technology is transforming the world we live in; it can be the great equalizer or differentiator. For any individual, project, state and country to be competitive, the key technology it must master is information gathering, processing and dissemination. In terms of people, this key technology marks the difference between the haves and have-nots, the info-rich and info-poor. A new definition for developed or developing nations has been established.

In this new world structure the demand for IT personnel far outstrips supply. In the USA this causes the stretch out of development schedules, projects to go over budget, and crimp expansion plans. Vacancies affect more than 10% of IT jobs in an organization; turnover represents 10% and in the Silicon Valley represents 20%. The shortage of IT personnel will last 10 to 15 years. This shortage gets translated in dead weight for the economy of a country. In the USA the potential job openings for IT workers are 450,000 and the universities are producing 1/6th of what is needed. For instance, by the year 2010 wireless communications area will require ten times the number of engineers working today, even with the creation of a global institute to address this need the gap will not be reduced for several decades. Clearly, talent is the core of being competitive for any organization and it must be found.

I have high expectations that this journal will be another tool to help raise the level of the human resources in the region. As noted above, talent is greatly needed in this new world order to make the region a pro-active participant instead of passive. Maybe now the countries of Latin America can act as a group and not as islands as it has been until the present. The journal should also be used as a marketing tool to attract industry participation in our institutions. We need to establish partnerships with industry to collaborate in education and research efforts, now more than ever we need each other. I will do my best to encourage significant participation from industry and more collaboration between industry and academe. I call to the members of ISTE to become more involved with this journal by writing papers, reviewing papers, and serving as Associate Editors.

Lastly, I want to thank all the individuals and institutions that participate in this challenging endeavor. I will certainly do my best to nurture this on-line journal in the coming years.

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