



It is not often that a journal receives a manuscript for an article that attempt to establish the very basics of a not so new area of investigation, namely *business intelligence* or BI. Disguised under multiple 'names' this topic (can we refer to it as a discipline yet?) is of the utmost importance to the world of business, that is the enterprise in particular as well as to the academic or research environment. But despite its relatively long history, BI is still trying to find a footing in these two worlds – that is, according to author V.H. Pirttimäki who wrote the first article *Conceptual analysis of business intelligence* in this issue. Primarily a theoretical study, the author holds the view that although there are numerous descriptions in the literature that tries to describe BI, there is no precise or universally shared conception of what BI is. The author therefore aims to provide an analysis of BI definitions and the related intelligence concepts, what the content of each key concept is and how intelligence concepts relate to each other. Another contribution of the article is to increase the academic understanding and status of the 'young field of research on intelligence activities'.

Still on a theoretical note, J.C. Mostert and M.M.M. Snyman's *Knowledge management framework for the development of an effective knowledge management strategy* proposes a knowledge management framework that can provide a clear and unambiguous knowledge base, which in turn can serve as a platform for the development of an effective knowledge management strategy. The authors argue that knowledge in itself will not ensure the success of an enterprise. They also make it clear that the principles presented in a framework have to be applied by a specific enterprise in order to develop a complete knowledge management strategy. The effectiveness of such a strategy will be directly related to the quality of the framework. However, this means that, only after a strategy has been developed in accordance with the principles and guidelines of the framework, can the effectiveness of the framework be evaluated.

Those employed in the ICT industries should take note of the content of the two other articles. *Information management: the adoption of order processing for B2B e-commerce* by F.W. Voges and S.C. Warden, investigates the management of information flow in the order processing activities of small enterprises, better know by their acronym *SMMEs*. (By the way, those readers interested in research methodology should read this article, for it is a good example of research utilizing case study research.) In this article, the authors argue that the management of information flow in this area is not always fully understood by *SMMEs*. Furthermore, an inefficient supply chain is often the result of the lack of timely and accessible inter-company information and data exchange. Small suppliers often simply cannot afford the technology infrastructure and resources available for proper integration with supply chains. This research investigated suppliers and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) retailers adopting B2B e-commerce by means of case study research using evidence obtained from nine *SMME* suppliers located in the Western Cape, South Africa. The article culminated in a set of guidelines for small suppliers when adopting B2B e-commerce for order processing.

The last and also industry specific contribution is from P.L. Wessels and L.P. Steenkamp (*An assessment of current practices in creating and using passwords as a control mechanism for information access*). Their departure point is (quoting Kaye 1995:5) that good information improves decision making, enhances efficiency and provides a competitive edge to the organization that knows more than its opposition. Then follows their premise: 'This information should be protected from unauthorised access to ensure that the organization

retains its competitive edge'. And more specific: passwords are part of tightening security for allowing end-users access to systems, applications, data files, network servers or personal (such as electronic banking) information. The authors discuss the issues involved in selecting and using passwords and consequently assess the current practices employed by end-users in creating and storing passwords to gain access to sensitive information. The results of this survey refer *inter alia* to the fact that information managers cannot rely only on users to employ proper password control in order to protect sensitive information.

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