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Editorial:

New Frontiers in e-Business and e-Government

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Abstract

This special issue will explore a wide range of issues, from the emerging opportunities and challenges of MMORPGs, the new media industries, emerging technologies and applications and new Challenges in e-Government and e-Public services, to using e-Business to facilitate regional economic developments.

Keywords: e-business, e-government, e-public services, new technologies

EDITORIAL

The first Internet boom started in the mid-1990s, and it quickly led to a dot.com bubble on the stock markets, which eventually burst in 2001. However, the market recovered very rapidly and by 2005 there was already talk of a second Internet boom, which is much more robust than the first one. For many commentators, the Internet boom itself has never stopped, because even during the stock market downturn people from all over the world continued to join the Internet to search, chat, e-mail and spend money. The way we work, play, communicate, learn and shop has changed significantly, and in business and governmental organisations throughout the world new strategies, new business models and new organisational designs have emerged to exploit the new possibilities enabled by the Internet and related technologies.

Furthermore, continuous rapid developments in Internet and related technologies, infrastructure, services and applications are leading to new opportunities and challenges that could not even be envisaged only a few years ago. Many significant developments emerging from the first round of the Internet boom - Google (search), eBay (auction), Amazon.com (e-tailing), Wikipedia, Lastminute.com, Easyjet (low cost airlines using Internet based low cost models), text messaging, instant messaging, online chat rooms, online communities and forums, have been joined by Social networking Sites (e.g. Myspace, Facebook, Bebo), YouTube, Skype, free and paid music and ring tone downloading, blogs, podcasting, and perhaps most significantly, MMORPGs (e.g. Second life, World of Warcraft). New developments, from Web 2.0 and SOA (service oriented architecture), to shared services and RFID … are in combination bringing about radical changes that could perhaps be appropriately described as the 'Second Internet Boom'.

As well as private sector organisations embracing these advances and exploring potential business opportunities, many central and local governments and various types of non-business organisations such as health services and voluntary organisations are making significant investments in investigating emerging possibilities and applications brought about by the Internet and related technologies. Clearly, the potential benefits are huge but the challenges involved are also much more sophisticated than most people have envisaged and the full social, cultural, economic and policy implications of these developments are still poorly understood. In particular, after the first round of putting governmental information and public services online, especially through the pursuit of joint-up government in many countries to break down departmental barriers and improve the quality of information and services, many extremely difficult conceptual, technological and regulatory challenges – along with methodological issues for researchers and developers - have been highlighted. Therefore, the enormous business opportunities associated with these internet and related technology developments need to be systematically investigated in conjunction with the potentially even greater challenges.

This special issue will explore a wide range of issues, from the emerging opportunities and challenges of MMORPGs, the new media industries, emerging technologies and applications and new Challenges in e-Government and e-Public services, to using e-Business to facilitate regional economic development. We hope this special issue will stimulate discussion and debate and promote focused research in this area, contributing to the development of relevant theory, practice and policy in the increasingly networked, knowledge based economy. This is still a rapidly evolving area, and more research is clearly needed. We welcome any comments, feedback, suggestions, and constructive criticisms.

Any errors remain the responsibility of the authors.

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