2013 ACIS Conference Track on IS History

December 4-6, 2013, Melbourne, Australia

The Past, Present and Future of the IS Discipline

Track Description

“A generation, which ignores history, has no past – and no future” – Robert Heinlein

History and its study are important for us all and no less so for the IS discipline in considering its past, present and future. Panels on Information Systems (IS) History are planned for ECIS 2013, PACIS 2013 and AMCIS 2013, and it is also likely there will be a panel at ICIS 2013. The AIS has recently appointed an official historian, Professor Ping Zhang from Syracuse University who is moderator for these panels. Two of these panels focus on IS as it has developed in different regions and on how IS histories can or should be told.

The March issue for the Journal of Information Technology is devoted to the History of IS. In the editorial, Bryant and his co-authors comment about historiography, the study of how historical studies are carried out and reported. They note that there is little guidance about historiography for, or from, the IS discipline, Mitev and De Vaujany (2012) being a notable exception.

ACIS has on more than one occasion been a forum for discussion about the future of IS as a discipline, and past conference themes have focused on its identity, its evolution, its impact and indeed its “coming of age”. Back in 2006, the Australasian Journal of Information Systems (vol 14 no 1) ran a special feature on the information systems discipline in Australia to which many of our most well-known and respected IS colleagues in Australia contributed. It may well again be time for us to join this conversation about IS history.