



explore if the relationship between SMEs and IS consultants has any impact or influence on the development of IS competences in SMEs. The research presented a number of competences that are compensated or enhanced by consultants. However, the major finding from the study is that, rather than help develop IS competences within an SME, IS consultants help SMEs overcome a lack of IS competences. Finally, in the third paper, Ciara Heavin and Frederic Adam set about understanding how software SMEs approach knowledge management (KM) and how these knowledge capabilities provide greater flexibility to deal with environmental uncertainty. One of the key findings of the study revealed that an over reliance on pivotal players at a management level means that their removal from that position could result in significant decreases in knowledge capabilities and a loss of knowledge.

The next 3 papers address issues around the ever burning concern of **IS evaluations**, whether it be the evaluation of people, process, or technology. In the fourth paper, Olgerta Tona and Sven A. Carlsson use relational emergence theory, based on the philosophy of critical realism, to theorise and operationalise the fusion view of IS evaluations, as it lacks a theoretical grounding. They conclude that in the fusion view, the evaluation process shall embrace a holistic perspective, where IS, users, task processes, etc. should be considered as one entity. In the fifth paper, John McAvoy, Tadhg Nagle and David Sammon propose an evaluation method, incorporating the principles of sense making and devil's advocate, where a consensus of perspectives is challenged before they are considered valid. This is achieved in a workshop where participants reflect on their own perception of reality and take part in discussions on identifiable differences in perspectives. In effect, the workshop challenges consensus and the creation of a new common understanding. The paper concludes that problems such as groupthink can create a false consensus, and the workshop provides a mechanism for challenging this. Finally, in the sixth paper, Ruth de Villiers and Marco Cobus Pretorius undertake a study to evaluate a collaborative learning environment on Facebook. The findings indicated that a good social climate and a conducive, well-facilitated collaborative learning environment existed, where inter-personal relationships were fostered between distance learners, and academic value arose from independent research, peer-learning and social negotiation. However, while Facebook served well as an environment for collaborative learning, it did not provide a full Web 2.0 environment for the collaborative generation of artifacts or projects.

In our seventh and final paper, Elena Serova turns our attentions to **new approaches to modeling management decision processes**. In her paper, she focuses on the various modeling methods and technologies that are employed in the development of intelligent decision support systems and evaluates the growing role of the agent based modeling approach in the design of management decision processes. The paper concludes with the argument that the increasing demand for optimisation of decision support systems development has caused leading modelers to consider Agent Based modeling and combined approaches in order to obtain deeper insights into complex and interdependent processes. Such research is valuable in the current Big Data climate where the rapid deployment of enabling technologies is a key requirement for organisational decision makers.

It was a pleasure to bring ECIME to Cork in 2012. If you attended we hope you enjoyed your time with us and we hope you enjoy this selection of papers also.

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