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## Message from the WG 8.2 Chair

### What's in a Name? By Any Other Name a Working Group ...



**Julie E. Kendall, Rutgers University, USA**

*What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.  
(William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet Act II, Scene II)*

Part of my life is devoted to explaining to other people what IFIP and Working Group 8.2 are all about. Within our small group of IS re-

*(Continued on page 3)*

## IFIP WG 8.2 in Athens

### • Special points of interest:

- Message from WG 8.2 Chair
- IFIP WG 8.2 Conference in Athens
- Details about forthcoming conferences
- Oasis workshop December 2003
- Upcoming events

### IS Perspectives and Challenges in the Context of Globalization

The Joint IFIP WG 8.2/ 9.4 Working Conference was a great success. The conference was held from 15-17 June, 2003 in Athens, Greece. Special thanks are due to the Organizing Chair Angeliki Poulymenakou, General Chair Geoff Walsham (UK), and Program Chairs Ramiro Montealegre (US/ES) and Mikko Korpela (FI) for an outstanding conference.

A special highlight was the confer-



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*Organizations and Society in  
Information Systems*

# OASIS

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## Athens (continued)

ence dinner in a stunning location overlooking the Acropolis. The IFIP 8.2 tradition of conference delegates performing a national song was re-invented for the occasion (see Duane Truex and colleagues pictured on page 1, and the African contingent performing below).



The conference proceedings have been published in book form by Kluwer. The full citation information is as follows:

Korpela, M., Montealegre, R., and Poulymenakou, A. *IS Perspectives and Challenges in the Context of Globalization*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston, 2003.

## Chair's message (continued)

searchers it is a frequent and pleasant task. They know of the group, or belong to it; they have participated in our meetings and conferences; they are familiar with our publications; or their colleagues are. They are an easy and often enthusiastic audience. They know our name; it signifies quality, and something special. Others, unfortunately, do not know our name. Sometimes it is even a barrier to recognition.

Frequently you can find me trying to convince young researchers to attend an OASIS workshop. Or I am explaining to some distracted administrator (who controls university travel budgets) why it is so critical that researchers are funded for our working conferences.

Most commonly, however, I am trying to demonstrate to a junior researcher, whose academic career is just beginning, that, of all of the research affiliations they could strike up, belonging to IFIP WG 8.2 is probably the most rewarding, most fulfilling, and wisest long-term commitment they could make.

I believe that as members and friends of WG 8.2 we are obligated to tell our students, colleagues, deans and editors about our working group. But how can we do it?

One of the powerful communication methods that we have at our disposal are the names we give to ourselves and our groups. Even though we have our formal name such as IFIP Working Group 8.2, that is not the only way we talk about ourselves.

### Since you're a Friend, You Can Call Us "OASIS"

In English, when we want to indicate that someone is truly a member of the group, we bestow a nickname. Someone named Charles becomes "Charlie", or a popular professor is called "Doc." Often a nickname begins in childhood when a child's sibling cannot correctly pronounce their name. Many other languages have diminutives that connote familiarity and inclusiveness.

In WG 8.2, we have an "official" nickname, (more properly, an acronym). It is the word *OASIS* standing for **O**rganizations **A**nd **S**ociety in **I**nformation **S**ystems. *OASIS* is much easier to say than IFIP Working Group 8.2, and it conjures up several enjoyable connotations. Oasis can mean retreat, haven, refuge or sanctuary. It is effortless to say, and easy to hear.

Indeed, we like our nickname so much that we use the very same word in three distinct ways. Can you name them all? As I just mentioned, our official nickname and acronym is the origin of our use of the word *OASIS*; the second is the name we give to the twice annual newsletter you are presently reading; and the third is the name we give to our informal research workshops.

Should we be casting about for a new nickname to more accurately differentiate our activities? I would be interested to hear your views or suggestions.

### What Do You Call "Us" to Outsiders?

While we are contemplating our collective fascination with the term *OASIS*, you might want to ask yourself how you go about describing IFIP Working Group 8.2 to outsiders, since oftentimes the uninitiated do not recognize our name. Here are the descriptions I tend to draw on: international research group; a research group originally founded under the auspices of UNESCO; an international group ...you get the idea.

There is logic and system to the numbering of the working groups (you can check this out yourself at <http://www.ifip.org/>) and this can be explained to an outsider, if he or she has the required patience to bear with us that long. When working group members are asked to describe "us" to an outsider, I find that the inevitable characterization is one of family. By attending two out of three business meetings, and being nominated, voted on and approved by members, one can become a member of the official WG 8.2 family. For those who have not attended those two business meetings, or who are concerned about making a larger commitment, we have the rather quaint designation of "friend." Both names are a far cry from the official, systematic naming approach of IFIP, but they are decidedly apropos. We enjoy enacting the entailments of being a family.

# Minutes of the Business Meeting

## Athens, June 17, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 by Julie Kendall (US), Chair of the Working Group.

### 1. Introduction

Julie thanked our hosts in Greece, particularly Organizing Chair Angeliki Poulymenakou (GR), as well as the conference General Chair Geoff Walsham (UK), and Program Chairs Ramiro Montealegre (US/ES) and Mikko Korpela (FI) for an outstanding conference.

### 2. Forthcoming Workshops and Working Conferences

There will be an Oasis Workshop in Seattle (US) immediately prior to ICIS in December 2003. The submission deadline is September 30. More information can be found on the WG 8.2 website at [www.ifipwg82.org](http://www.ifipwg82.org). The website provides links to business meeting minutes and the newsletter as well as calls for papers. Julie Kendall (US) encouraged attendees to submit a small paper. Each presentation at a workshop is only 5-7 minutes, with lots of time allocated for feedback.

The next Working Conference, "Relevant Theory and Informed Practice: Looking Forward from a 20-Year Perspective on IS Research," will be held in Manchester (UK), 15-17 July 2004. Program Co-Chairs Duane Truex (US) and Trevor Wood-Harper (UK) gave a small presentation on the Manchester conference. This conference draws upon the 1984 Manchester conference with its focus on research methods, and the 1990 Copenhagen and 1997 Philadelphia conferences, which also addressed research methods. The submission deadline is 10 September 2003. More information can be found via the WG 8.2 website at [www.ifipwg82.org](http://www.ifipwg82.org).

At the last business meeting (December 2002 in Barcelona) we approved a proposal to have a Working Conference in Cleveland (USA), 1-3 August 2005. The theme of this conference will be "Designing Ubiquitous Information Environments: Socio-Technical Issues and Challenges". The General Chair will be Kalle Lyytinen (US). Program Co-Chairs will be Carsten Sorensen (UK) and Youngjin Yoo (US). The Organizing Chair has not yet been named.

Julie Kendall announced that we are looking for volunteers to host an Oasis Workshop prior to ICIS in December 2004 in Washington, DC (US). The organizer is responsible for coordinating the arrangements, publicizing the call for papers, and publishing the abstracts as well as possibly the complete papers on the web. There is normally a nominal fee charged to attendees to cover the cost of the room and coffee breaks, etc. There were no volunteers at the meeting. However, Isabel Ramos (PO), came forward after the meeting to volunteer to take charge of this event.

### 3. Proposals for Upcoming Working Conferences

Julie Kendall presented a schedule of upcoming meetings and the length of time between each meeting. It will be 13 months until the July 2004 conference in Manchester, another 13 months until the August 2005 conference in Cleveland, and then 16 months until a potential December 2006 conference. It could be 12-18 months between that conference and another conference in December 2007 or July 2008. Previously, the Working Group has approved upcoming conferences approximately 3 ½ years in advance. Julie raised the issue of timing – if we vote on proposals too far in advance, are we giving a fair chance to all who want to propose?

A proposal was presented by Debra Howcroft (UK) and Eileen Trauth (US/EI) for a Working Conference to be held in December 2006 in Limerick, Ireland. Organizing co-chairs would be Brian Fitzgerald (EI) and Tom Butler (EI). The general theme will be social exclusion, which refers both to people and groups. Limerick has easy access to/from Shannon Airport. The conference will be held immediately prior to ICIS, which will be in London. Geoff Walsham (UK) and Heinz Klein (US) commented on the relevance of this topic to WG 9.4. Geoff suggested that the organizers make sure that publicity about the conference should be shared with the WG 9.4 con-

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stituency. Heinz asked that, given the theme's link to developing countries, wouldn't it make sense to have representative from WG 9.4 on the program committee? Eileen Trauth said that these issues would be considered, and there would be a panel at the conference made up of representatives from different Working Groups addressing different IFIP themes.

David Avison (UK) moved that we vote to accept this proposal. Geoff Walsham (UK) seconded. Following a show of hands of current members, a vote was held and the proposal was accepted.

Julie then asked if there were any further conference proposals to be presented (although no vote would be conducted at this time). Tony Salvadore (US) presented a proposal for Eleanor Wynn (US), Sandra Sieber (ES), and Kevin Crowston (US). This conference would be located in Portland, Oregon in July or August 2007. The proposed theme is "Virtuality in Times of Change".

#### **4. New Business**

Richard Baskerville (US) proposed to extend the appointments of the current chair and membership of the Award Committee. A motion was made to keep the group as it currently is, rather than change the membership. The motion was passed.

#### **5. New Members**

Names were solicited of individuals who were qualified and interested in becoming new members of IFIP WG 8.2. The following individuals were nominated for membership, subject to a verification of past attendance by the Secretary:

Kathy McGrath (UK), Chris Atkinson (UK), Joe Feller (EI), Margunn Aanestad (NO), Agneta Nilsson (SE), Bongsug Chae (US), Anja Mursu (FI), and Nabeel Al-qirim (NZ).

#### **8. Other Business**

TC 8 Chair Dewald Roode (SA) encouraged members to attend WITFOR (World Information Technology Forum), which will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania, 27-29 August 2003. Fees will be waived for WG 8.2 or 9.4 members. For more information, see [www.witfor.org](http://www.witfor.org).

David Avison (UK) said a few words about the PhD Supervisors' Workshop sponsored by TC 8 that was held the day before the conference. Forty-five people attended the workshop, and at the end agreed to produce a book. David thanked Angeliki Poulymenakou (GR) for her help in arranging the workshop and related events.

On a somber note, Roberta Lamb (US) shared with the group news that Rob Kling had passed away suddenly. She announced that a Festschrift, a volume of writings presented as a tribute to a scholar, will be published by Information Technology & People. Submissions which reflect the concepts and issues of social informatics are invited. In addition, several of Rob's colleagues will be invited to submit short, retrospective pieces. For information, contact Roberta Lamb (US) or Steve Sawyer (US), or see [www.itandpeople.org](http://www.itandpeople.org).

There was no other business, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

*Nancy L. Russo (US), Secretary*



## Chair's Message (continued)

### All Work and No Play: The Paradox Behind the "Working Group" Name

Notice the contrast between the name of "working group" and the meaning of family and friends. Yes, families can and do work together, but a commonly accepted bromide is that "Families who play together, stay together." Indeed, one of the key aspects of names or metaphors is their paradoxical nature. Madsen (1989) notes a surprising aspect of metaphors in that while they illuminate some unseen facets of an object; they also hide or obscure other portions of it.

So, the name "working group" for all its seriousness of purpose, obscures some of the family-like play and social interaction that are a hallmark of any WG 8.2 gathering. You cannot interview a WG 8.2 member for long without eliciting a lively description of the unique social interaction that attracts and renews their participation in our "working" conferences and "work" shops time and time again.

Our members are unlike others, if one considers the traditional definition of group membership. While members report a distinct sense of belonging to a research community, they pay no dues (by rule of IFIP), nor are they issued a membership card.

While many researchers outside the group would correctly label IFIP as a professional society, WG 8.2 does not enact the society name in many ways. We have IFIP rules and guidelines that we adhere to, but much more of how we actually behave is based on tradition.

### Using New Names to Attract Members

We find that when people are personally invited to attend a conference (or other event), they are much more likely to attend than if they are solicited in more impersonal ways. So we need to use words that attract junior researchers, Ph.D. students and others, who are looking for new ways of seeing the world, to come to our work-shops and working conferences. This translates into the necessity for us to employ engaging and perhaps, new, names. While there is a lot in the name of IFIP WG 8.2, family is a strong, engaging concept and so is oasis. Are there others we should try?

### References

- Madsen, K. H. (1989) Breakthrough by breakdown: Metaphors and structured domains. In H.K. Klein and K. Kumar (Eds.), *Systems development for human progress* (pp. 41-53). New York: North Holland.
- Shakespeare, William. *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, London: Oxford University Press, 1914. New York: Bartleby.com, 200. [www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com), last accessed September 30, 2003.

## Upcoming IFIP WG 8.2 Conferences and Workshops

- Oasis Workshop**, Seattle, Washington, USA, 14 December 2003 (immediately before ICIS). The deadline for submissions was 30 September 2003 but you are welcome to attend. Check out the website at <http://island.isy.vcu.edu/oasis2003/default.htm> for further details. Any other questions can be emailed to [oasis2003@isy.vcu.edu](mailto:oasis2003@isy.vcu.edu)
- "Manchester 2: Relevant Theory and Informed Practice: Looking Forward from a Twenty Year Perspective on IS Research,"** IFIP 8.2 Working Conference, Manchester, England, 15-17 July 2004. The deadline for submission was 10 September 2003. The conference website is at <http://cba.fiu.edu/dsis/truexd/ifip2004/>
- "Designing Ubiquitous Information Environments: Socio-technical Issues and Challenges,"** IFIP 8.2 Working Conference, Cleveland, Ohio, August 1-3, 2005. The deadline for submissions is 1 February 2005. For further details turn to Page 7 for the Call of Papers.

# Cleveland Conference in August 2005

## Call for Papers for IFIP WG 8.2 Working Conference August 1-3, 2005, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

### Designing Ubiquitous Information Environments: Socio-technical Issues and Challenges

The rapid developments in mobile and wireless communication technologies and the continuing miniaturization computing devices make it possible to create ubiquitous information environments. The emergence of ubiquitous computing as the next wave of organizational computing offers new possibilities and opportunities for organizations to improve their productivity and effectiveness. Companies like FedEx and UPS are investing millions of dollars to upgrade their wireless network infrastructure that will bring the information about the packages, trucks, and courriers ever closer to their customers. Retail giant Wal-Mart is actively exploring the various mobile technologies such as global positioning systems (GPS) and RFID tags to improve its operations. Millions of customers in countries like Japan and Korea have signed up for broadband cellular phone services to exchange video clips and download their favorite music. Many Scandinavian and European countries provide extensive mobile banking services, payment services and other business and personal services that utilize mobile and smart phones. Progressive Insurance, an American auto insurance company, has experimented with GPS in order to implement a usage-based premium system, and GM's Onstar service provides service support and other online services for car drivers.

At the same time, the emergence of ubiquitous information environments challenges many of the traditional assumptions about organizations, computing, communication, and work. The increased mobility in ubiquitous information environments will bring new meaning about issues of time and space in organizational behavior. The unprecedented scale of deployment of wireless tools and sensors embedded in the environments will challenge us to rethink about technology acceptance and scale of operation in organizations. The personalization and the pervasive nature of these tools will blur the boundaries between social and technical worlds of organizational computing.

We invite theoretical and empirical papers that examine design, managerial, behavioral, and organizational challenges and issues with ubiquitous information environments. The topics for the conference will include (but will not be restricted to) the following:

- Co-design of social and technical systems in ubiquitous information environments
- New conceptual frameworks that provide analytical tools for studying ubiquitous information environments in organizations
- Discussions on new research approaches to study ubiquitous information environments
- Knowledge management in ubiquitous information environments
- Socio-technical analysis of ubiquitous information environments
- Coordination of knowledge and expertise in ubiquitous knowledge environments
- Organizational, economic and social impacts of ubiquitous information environments in organizational and societal level
- Implementation of large-scale ubiquitous information environments

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### General Chair

Kalle Lyytinen, Case Western Reserve University, USA

### Program Co-Chairs

Carsten Sorensen, London School of Economics, UK  
Youngjin Yoo, Case Western Reserve University, USA

### Submission

- Authors are invited to papers representing original contributions in the area of ubiquitous information environments.
- Submitted manuscripts should be about 5000 words in length including tables and figures. Submissions must be emailed to Carsten Sorensen (c.sorensen@lse.ac.uk) or Youngjin Yoo (yyoo@cwru.edu). Documents in standard word processing formats are preferred. For more information, visit the conference web site at <http://ifip2005.cwru.edu>

### Important Dates:

February 1, 2005: Deadline for submission of papers  
April 15, 2005: Acceptance notification

## OASIS Workshop 14 December 2003

### Call for Participation

#### Organizations and Society in Information Systems (OASIS) 2003 Workshop

<http://island.isy.vcu.edu/oasis2003/>

**Sheraton Hotel  
Seattle, USA**

**9 AM-3:30 PM Sunday 14 December 2003**  
(immediately before ICIS)

- The OASIS workshop is open to all interested scholars and professionals who are researching in the area of organizations, information systems and society. Along with members and friends of IFIP WG 8.2, we welcome researchers new to, or interested in, intensive research in IS. Intensive research was defined for a special edition of *MIS Quarterly* as empirical research that employs qualitative, case, and/or interpretive methods.
- Come get to know our members and their research interests, issues, and methodologies in a relaxed and supportive setting. The unique and collegial character of WG 8.2 ensures constructive, helpful and high quality environment. OASIS is a particularly useful forum for those just embarking on their research careers who need constructive advice on research approaches.
- Registration: There will be a nominal registration fee for the workshop to cover the cost of coffee breaks, audio-visual equipment and copying. All attendees and presenters will be required to register. We will provide pre-registration as well as registration at the door in cash (receipts will be provided). Details will be provided on the IFIP WG 8.2 Website (<http://www.ifipwg82.org>).
- Co-Chairs:** Gurpreet Dhillon, Virginia Commonwealth University; Ray Hackney, Manchester Metropolitan University, Erica L. Wagner, Cornell University
- Please email any questions regarding this workshop to the Co-Chairs at [oasis2003@isy.vcu.edu](mailto:oasis2003@isy.vcu.edu)