Welcome to a New Era of IT in 2005

Once again, I welcome all of you to a new year of IT Professional. This year the world of information technology continues to turn the corner and steadily grow into a more secure, less vulnerable, and more reliable state of operation.

Because I am in my final year as editor in chief, I want to say that it has been a privilege to serve you as EIC since 2002. For me personally, it has been a learning experience much broader than I would have imagined. I have learned a tremendous amount through reviewing the many articles that IT Pro has published and through the verbal interaction I have had with the editors, advisory board members, the Computer Society staff, the authors, and you, our readers, when articles of interest crossed your desks. I especially want to thank my associate EICs, Jay Bragg and Jeff Voas, for their outstanding contributions in soliciting articles and maintaining order in the editorial process. They have been invaluable to me and to the magazine’s success.

I also want to thank the unseen heroes of IT Pro’s issues, our peer reviewers. Without their diligence and support, the articles that you read might not have held up to your scrutiny and standards of integrity. The reviewer’s role is critical to this community and helps IT Pro maintain its credibility within the broad spectrum of material that fits into IT. Considering just the topics in this past year, you can see that the material and expertise required by our reviewers has been extensive and broad. In 2004, IT Pro covered business alignment, distance learning, ethics, grid computing, information extraction, outsourcing, spyware, storage technology, and (of course) wireless technology. In covering this realm successfully, IT Pro’s editors and peer reviewers deserve a medal, and I truly thank them all for their support.

Editorial Themes and Topics

If you haven’t noticed, our issues do not have just a single theme. Rather, the editorial board and I have endeavored to identify a theme for each issue coupled with floating articles or topics that either extend information on past themes, or introduce readers to new innovations or hot topics of interest. We intend the topics (as we refer to them) to be more descriptive of services or tools that IT professionals need. We hope that this mix of themes and topics appeals to you, and we welcome comments.

Of course, our editorial columns aim to entice you to comment so that we can start a discussion with you and hopefully learn from that open discussion. In addition, we have had the opportunity to introduce new topics—grid computing and Web services—to explore your interest and to provide a platform for information flow to you in this vital area. We were fortunate to have our expert in this field, Liang-Jie Zhang from IBM’s T.J. Watson Research Center, to support the gathering of articles and to lead us in this area.

This year, we have chosen the following pattern of themes and topics for our issues to address. The first issue focuses on what we feel is one of the hottest real-world topics of the day: IT operations during crisis situations. These articles provide you with architectural insights as well as experienced-based knowledge of how IT operations are changing to accommodate the threat of emergencies and wartime situations. An excellent overview of the architectural issues and interoperability concerns associated with public-safety wireless communications leads off this issue. In addition, a topical article related to the crisis communications theme describes the benefits of commercially available satellite communications to augment military needs in the military environment in Iraq. Other articles in this first issue will continue our pattern of mixing themes and topics as appropriate. Hopefully you will benefit from our choices.

Our March-April issue addresses Web services and services computing in more detail than we have in the past. The issue will also focus on home
networking services and the changing role of CIOs.

Later issues will look at the impact that regulatory changes are having on IT, followed by search technology advancements; middleware roles in today’s growing Web service operations; more on the infamous spyware; digital libraries and university curricula aimed at future IT; and the evolution of database software. Other theme articles will cover outsourcing, open source software, and advances in storage networks.

Finally, for upcoming issues, we look forward to interesting perspective from Jeff Voas’ corner of the world, addressing spyware, return on investment, terrorism, intelligence, election software, gaming, and bankruptcies. We’d like feedback from you about all of our perspective material as well as on Sorel Reisman’s The Ivory Tower. Sorel offers his perspectives on IT-related issues, and he obviously is hoping that you comment so that we can have a dialogue on the points that he raises. I continue to anticipate that this column will spur your interest and allow us to hear your views.

EDITORIAL AND ADVISORY BOARD CHANGES

I thank my editorial and advisory board members for their outstanding contributions throughout this past year, especially John Hwang, professor emeritus from California State University, Long Beach, who is leaving for semi-retirement as a professor for a noted university in Taiwan. I have moved John over from our editorial board, which he relished and loved to help support, to a less demanding but equally critical position as one of our advisory board members. I am going to miss his IT Administration and Management role on the editorial board and hope to find a suitable replacement as soon as possible. John’s Southeast Asia influence should be a definite benefit in the future. Finally, I plan on reviewing all editorial board positions this year to determine what new positions to consider.

Frank E. Ferrante
Editor in Chief