The theme of this year’s ECBS, “Raising Expectations of Computer Based Systems” was chosen partly in response to yet another summary of the overall poor state of software systems in terms of budget, delivery and performance.¹

Computer based systems, despite their increased complexity, fair no worse than ‘pure’ software systems. That is the good news. The bad news is obvious; we are not getting better.

How can we raise expectations? Can we expect systems to operate reliably, to perform in a timely manner? Can we expect systems to manage functional change? We need to expect systems to be delivered, in a useable state, on time and within budget. As purchasers or developers, we may work together to improve this situation.

The accepted papers show a definite commitment to raising expectations. We hope that the forum of industrialists, government, and academics which is the ECBS community will come out of this conference having had meaningful discussions, and with a strong sense of direction to raise expectations of computer based systems.

We want to thank the authors for their interest and contributions to the success of this meeting. Our sincere gratitude goes to the referees who, as often is the case, were asked to review many papers in a relatively short time. Their rigor in assessing the quality is reflected in this volume. IEEE Computer Society Press deserves much credit for its professionalism in handing the printing process. Last but not least, we are delighted to welcome you back to sunny Tucson where ECBS was held in 1995. We look forward to an exciting, vibrant, and productive conference.

John Leaney, Jerzy W. Rozenblit, and Jianfeng Peng

¹ “The UK public sector alone has spent an estimated £12.4 billion on software in the last year and the overall UK spend on IT is projected to be a monumental £22.6 billion,” says Basil Butler, Chairman of the working group that produced the report. “We looked at a range of studies showing that only around 16 per cent of IT projects can be considered truly successful.” The challenge of Complex IT projects (in the UK), http://www.bcs.org/server.php?show=conWebDoc.1761