Dedication to Professor Geoff Lockett
The mini-track on IS in global business is dedicated to Professor Geoff Lockett whose untimely death this summer was a terrible shock to all who knew him. Geoff has been involved with this track almost since its inception in 1991 and has been an active and dedicated researcher in the field of information systems and global business. His work was characterised by close involvement with business, and he worked extensively with a number of global companies on strategy and implementation of large-scale information systems. His early work in this area on pan-European and global systems with BP Chemicals and Airfuels was probably unique in identifying the organizational and structural changes that were necessary for success in the implementation of international IT systems, and he was able to communicate these organizational issues to senior managers who were often sceptical of the potential of IT. Geoff was passionate about developing the international outlook of young academics, and at some stage in their early careers, most of his research assistants and PhD students were encouraged to attend scholarly conferences in the US, Europe and the Far East. He was a founding member of AIS and always strove for increased interaction between US and European IS researchers.

Introduction
The globalisation of markets is now firmly established as one of the critical business forces acting on companies regardless of their industry, geographic location and size. Global product designs in industries as diverse as foodstuffs, accountancy, automotive, banking and information technology are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Related to this fundamental change in the way that companies perceive and approach their markets, tremendous structural changes are occurring at the level of the organization and the supply chain. Information technology systems are a critical component of all of these changes and organization-wide and supply chain IT system projects are often the largest ventures being managed by many firms. What has become very clear is that information systems failure is business failure, and the sheer scale of IT investment currently underway has led to a world-wide shortage of technical and management skills in information systems, typified by the immediate problem of resolving year 2000 issues.

Theories of Global Business
In common with information systems theory, there are many diverse approaches to explaining global business systems; geographic, technological, economic, organizational and strategic. Given the diverse nature of the research problem it seems appropriate that a diversity of theoretical approaches needs to be maintained in order to capture the complexity of the topic and its dynamic nature. This is reflected in the papers in the track which come from a range of international scholars tackling different aspects of the globalisation phenomenon, with a common element of building the information technology dimension into their theory development.

Contribution of Mini-Track
The papers presented in the mini-track reflect the theoretical and empirical diversity of the subject area. Each paper is discussed in turn:

In their paper on groupware technology, Marcus Ott and Ludwig Nastansky discuss a range of theoretical approaches to organization design centred on the innovative application of groupware technologies to support co-operative teams. It attempts to synthesise aspects of workflow design with IT concepts of groupware and operating systems.

In their paper on organization networks, Karin Dittewig takes a bold approach at explaining the different types of global organization networks present in the IT industry by examining the organization network characteristics of four of the leading companies: IBM; SAP; Microsoft; and Sun. A combination of theoretical approaches is taken to combine aspects of competitive advantages and organizational strengths.
strategy, transaction costs and property rights. This paper makes an important empirical contribution to an area which often lacks credible and plausible case data.

The third paper is focused on the processes involved in high information volume markets such as financial securities transactions. A theoretical framework to evaluate the process performance of financial securities transactions is applied to Robeco Group, a large European asset management organization. An extremely detailed case study analysis reveals the very high complexity of the intra and inter organizational processes involved, including the interplay between variables such as trust and security in addition to IT in determining the performance of the processes measured by throughput time and reliability.

At the level of the supply chain, Stefan Klein and Dorian Selz present an analysis of the current and future impacts of the internet and electronic commerce on the structure and operation of the automotive industry supply chains. They note that although the industry is dominated by physical products and associated infrastructure, the car companies are losing some of their control over their distribution channels, especially in geographically defined franchise networks and control over international price differences. To respond to these new pressures, an alternative model of an ‘mobility intermediary’ is proposed as one possible outcome of the current extensive changes.

Chris Holland and Geoff Lockett present a paper on the role and importance of trust in the formation of virtual organizations which are often geographically dispersed and international in their outlook. They present a model of trust which distinguishes between trust and actual behaviour, and link the theoretical models of the development of trust with concepts from the virtual organization literature. Several important theoretical outcomes are predicted centred on the role of inter-organizational information systems speeding up the trust development processes between economic partners and highlighting the importance of the trust variable in determining the successful formation of virtual organizations, whether from existing networks of organizations or developed from a green-field site.

Nathalie Mitev presents one of the few international comparisons of very large scale information systems in the academic and business literature, and compares the strategies of American Airlines and SNCF, the French railway company. It is a fascinating account of how yield management systems first developed in the US air industry were implemented in a totally different organizational, national, cultural and strategic context. To capture the complexity of the case phenomena, the implementation is analysed by reviewing the issues using a framework encompassing market, economic political and cultural factors. The analysis highlights the differences between American Airlines and SNCF, and in particular, how those differences affect the implementation of the business strategy.

The final paper by Jasna Kuljis, Robert Macredie and Ray Paul identifies the problems of information gathering in multinational retail banking. Based on a detailed case study of a large, universal bank, it identifies the difficulties of collecting similar information from national sites to support decision making in an international, fast-moving business environment. The authors suggest several different approaches to the problem and indicate future research opportunities in this area.

Discussion
The papers illustrate the pervasive influence of global pressures on businesses. The theoretical advances in this area are tested by empirical analyses of global organizations including Mercedes Benz, SAP, Robeco, Microsoft, Sun, IBM, American Airlines and SNCF. Ultimately there is no substitute for empirical evidence to test the efficacy and power of generalised theoretical frameworks.

The session will seek to encourage active delegate participation and we look forward to a lively debate of contemporary business and information systems issues associated with the globalization of organizations, markets and strategies.