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Editorial

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Editorial

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This issue presents two papers: one research paper and one opinion article – which further our understanding on the interrelationships between non-information systems (IS) resources and IS resources. In the research paper, Duncombe and Molla provide an exploratory model that assesses the factors that influence IS formalization of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in sub-Saharan Africa. The authors use a multi-method approach to collate and analyze data from Botswana and provide tentative conclusions concerning a broad range of possible influencing factors. Key findings from the study demonstrate that, though successful enterprise development requires optimum use of both formal and informal IS, there is a strong reliance on informal information practices amongst SMEs. The authors argue that information needs and resource needs are inextricably intertwined. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) and key external market linkages – a duality of factors that constitute two key drivers for formalization – go a long way to solving both information-based and resource-based market failures which characterize the developing contexts of SSA countries. Hence, non-IS resources – external market networks – mediate the use of ICTs in creating and sustaining value.

In the opinion article, Watson and McCubbrey discuss the Global Text Project and its objectives to create global free textbooks for students in the developing countries. The authors examine how current technology and social-based resources – the Internet and technology-enabled collaboration – can support the global efforts to address the educational resource constraints in resource-poor environments in the world. On one end, the Internet is a low cost channel for distributing information products in digital form; and on the other end, global digital communities have created the platform for collaborative creation of content. These two key technological and social developments, in their perspective, offer an opportunity to create a new model for textbook publishing.

The authors propose a free and open content library which will be available for students covering all major subjects for an undergraduate education. The proof of concept phase of the project has been completed; five books are available, including one in Arabic. A Spanish library based upon the work of scholars at the Universidad de Concepción is in preparation. They finally emphasize that globalization has enabled people to combine their talents to affect globalization - *only by*

creating a library of this dimension can we effectively address the needs of higher education in the developing world. We observe how IS resources complement other non-IS resources – social networks – to create new solutions to educational resource poverty issues in the developing world. We welcome the project as a novel contribution to current development initiatives.

These papers bring us closer to understanding the complex relationships – direct and indirect – between non-IS resources – social and business networks – and IS resources. They emphasize how IS resources interact directly and indirectly with other non-IS resources to address and/or circumvent the multi-prong resource challenges of developing countries and create value. These non-IS resources become part of the process and outcome of the use of IS resources to create and sustain value. Nonetheless, more research is needed to examine the strength of the relationships between these resources and in different contextual settings of organizations and different ICT applications in developing countries. We invite future research to build on this.