**Glocalisation of information services**

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This issue of *Business Information Review* sees the return of the *BIR Annual Survey* after a year’s break*.* Published continually since 1991, the BIR Annual Survey has provided an invaluable insight into changing demands, trends, and resource requirements in the business information sector for over thirty years. This year, Stephen Phillips has taken over preparing the survey, following in the footsteps of Denise Carter, Allan Foster, Pam Foster, and Gerry Smith. And in a change to tradition, we will be publishing the results of the survey not in one single report, but over several issues through the year. We’re very grateful to everyone who has contributed to the survey this year, and over the past thirty years, for sharing their expertise and insights for the benefit of the global business information community.

One of the issues that has featured in the BIR Annual Survey from the very first report has been the pressures that arise from globalisation of business, commerce, and regulation. The review of the first 29 years of the survey published in 2019, revealed that over the history of the survey:

the contexts within which business information work takes places has increasingly shifted to organisations with global or international reach [and] the kind of information that is the raw materials of business information work is now drawn from global sources (Tredinnick. 2019)

The pace of global integration of business and services has clearly transformed the commercial environment of recent decades but has also been met by ongoing resistance. Naomi Klein’s *No Logo* (2000) helped catalyse concern about the social and cultural consequences of globalisation on local communities. Anti-globalisation movements have been a significant part of twenty-first century politics and activism. And over the past five years the world has seen several of its major economies veer towards protectionism. But the interconnectedness of contemporary society, trade, and policy has also been underlined by the coronavirus pandemic, which has perhaps emphasised the importance of global co-operation while driving many territories to close borders, restrict travel, and limit exports. The global is now perhaps experienced in its specific locality, and the local context has global reach.

While the *BIR Annual Survey* has frequently commented on the ways in which globalisation has impacted on business information professionals, this year’s survey sees a slightly different relationship emerging between global and local. Stephen Philips highlights the ways in which information services within global companies often emphasise their regional expertise and focus. The one-size-fits-all approach captured in George Ritzer’s neologism *McDonaldization* - which describes the application of the uniform production processes of fast food to cultural and economic consumption – is ceding perhaps to a more complex integration of regional and local experience and practices in global organisations. We are approaching perhaps increasing glocalisation, in which local business contexts become integral to global operation.

Glocalisation is a term that has been in use since the late twentieth century, to describe the integration of global and local in business, culture and social theory. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* describes it as “the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems.” With its origins in the Japanese word *dochakuka,* originally an agricultural term meaning adapting farming techniques to local conditions but in the 1980s coming to mean the adaptation of global outlooks to local contexts (Robertson, 1995: 28), in business contexts glocalisation has predominantly been applied to the tailoring to differentiated and particular local markets of goods and services produced on a global basis (Robertson, 1995: 28). But glocalisation can mean more than simply differentiating a broadly uniform product for local markets – serving tea in British fast-food chains or green tea in coffee shops in China. Glocalisation can also imply a more integrated business strategy that leverages local expertise within global contexts.

The global coronavirus pandemic has perhaps emphasised glocal work practices over the past year. The local context – often very local contexts – of work has been emphasised as global organisations have transformed themselves into virtual businesses in response to the challenges of the pandemic. Global operations now stretch perhaps from kitchen tables to international markets. Furthermore, the ways in which the pandemic has affected different regions at different times and resulted in local and regional restrictions transforming the business environment has required more flexible and integrated responses. As a consequence glocalisation has re-emerged as a description of the potential shape of business in the post-pandemic world, emphasising the integration of local working practices into global operations, and suggesting more sustainable business models of the future. If the defining image of global commerce is international business travel, the defining image of glocal commerce is perhaps the international conference call.

Perhaps of particular interest in these potential trends towards more localised global businesses is the ways in which it reflects perhaps the existing skills-sets of the business information profession. As local contexts become more important to global business, the importance of regional, national, and local business information of all kinds is emphasised. This year’s *BIR Annual Survey* highlights that the value of commercial information management services is often already driven by regional specialism and by expertise in the information resources, sources, and regulatory contexts within local economies. A more glocal post-pandemic world may emphasise the existing skills and expertise of business information professionals.

**March 2021 Business information review**

The March 2021 issue of *Business Information Review* leads with the *BIR Annual Survey* written by Stephen Phillips*.* This year the survey is based on nineteen in-depth interviews with business information professionals. Results of the annual survey will be split over several parts published over the year. This first part discusses trends in organisational structure and staffing in business information services, and reflects on the impact of COVID-19 on the sector.

During the course of 2020 and into 2021 many workers have had to become more comfortable with remote working, teleconferencing and online delivery. With its significant presence in the business services sector, business information work has often been at the forefront of these kinds of changes to work, learning, and engagement practices. Our second paper explores a case study of the transition to remote learning for the University of Brighton’s MBA. Written by Jela Webb, the paper not only shares the experience of moving rapidly to online educational delivery, but reflects on the relevant lessons for the corporate sector in thinking about remote working, corporate training, and reskilling and upskilling the workforce. Jela Webb writes that “remote working and learning will see more and more digital training programmes delivering content to a wide constituency of employees. Building employee skills that are critical to new business models will help organisations to respond effectively to the challenges ahead.”

Our second professional article for this issue was written by Ann Cullen and Patrick S. Noonan explores the challenge of information overload, and filtering information sources, presenting several frameworks to aid in filtering information for effective processing, interpretation and analysis. Entitled “Who Owns and Cares about the Data: a method for identifying and gathering information for business research investigations” it provides clear step-by-step approaches for information research, noting that “effectively gathering information for decision making is an important skill that businesspeople have always found challenging” and that “in today’s dynamic global market environment such challenges have only increased”.

Two research papers complete the March issue. “Fostering big data analytics capability through process innovation: Is management innovation the missing link?” was written by Edwin Henao-García, Jose Arias-Pérez, and Nelson Lozada. The paper analyzes the relationships between process innovation capability, management innovation and big data analytics capability, covering aspects related to a better understanding of how firms can obtain benefit from their investments in big data. The main results suggest that management innovation and process innovation capabilities have an important role in the development of big data analytics capability. “Emerging Trends and Impact of Business Intelligence & Analytics in Organizations: Case Studies from India” was written by Aditi Shalin Divatia, Jyoti Tikoria, and Sunil Lakdawala. It addresses case studies of business intelligence and analytics in India.

**References**

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