

DEBATE FORUM

Debate Editor

Bo Dahlbom

At IRIS 19, this summer, Pål Sørgaard was complaining about the conservative nature of traditional computer science departments, about their lack of willingness to adjust their curricula to the changes in information technology use, and to the changing role of information technology in society. Students would soon no longer, he said, turn to the departments of computer science to learn about information technology. Systems development groups would have to find new institutional settings in order to survive, and play a role in the education of information technology experts. It would be interesting to hear the reactions from the IRIS community to Pål's complaints.

In the last issue I tried to encourage a debate on the identity and orientation of our discipline. Markku Nurminen has re-

sponded by asking me whether I wanted to publish his "Infurgic Manifesto," expressing the view on the field held by Markku's group at Turku (Laboris) and by the group constituting the FIRE project at Oslo. That was an offer I could not refuse. When the manifesto was originally presented at IRIS 17, in Syöte, it caused an unusually heated debate, with Lars Mathiassen objecting rather strongly and Kari Kuutti defending. In the next issue, I hope to have reactions from both of them.

"Why aren't you in Brussels?" Rob Kling asked us at IRIS this summer. "Why isn't the systems development community contributing to the European debate about the information society? Why is it that economists and sociologists formulate the white papers and national IT-plans for the future?" As if they were responding to this challenge, Pål

Sørgaard and Kristin Braa, giving critical comments on the Norwegian IT-plan, are inviting us to the sort of debate Kling was asking for. Kling himself has more or less promised that he will join this debate in the next issue.

So, in this issue we have two debate contributions. At IRIS this summer, I lamented the fact that the debate forum did not receive any comments or reactions from the journal readers. My worries are not wholly allayed, but now I am more hopeful. But in order for the debate forum of each issue to contain the five to ten contributions that I think it should, you will have to begin mailing me your angry letters, critical comments, or reactions to papers published in the journal, recent books or events, short or long. The deadline for the next issue is December 1st.



In the debate forum the journal will publish critical notices about the state of Scandinavian information systems research in general, but we will prefer criticism with a clear address, be it a paper published in this journal (or somewhere else), a book, a conference, or some other phenomenon within the range of our community, in order to make it possible to get a dialogue going without delay.

The debate forum editor will determine what is fit to print and what is not. Critical notices will normally be sent to the one being attacked for response before it is published. The editor will take initiatives to bring about debates, but will of course be dependent on suggestions and material supplied by the

community. So, please submit your angry letters, critical notices of books published (but no ordinary reviews, please), or trends observed, as well as suggestions for debates.

Contributions should be sent by email to scand-debate@cs.auc.dk.