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Guest Editorial

ACJ Special Issue on "IT in Health-Care"

Information Technology, as a discipline, has made its mark on several professions and now forms an integral part of many other professions. The impact of IT in Health-Care is no exception. As an emerging discipline, Medical/Health Informatics is becoming established in Australia. It embodies the multidisciplinary focus that the health-care disciplines require in addition to their specialised knowledge base and training.

The role of the ACS, as the premiere organisation for the IT professions and IT-related disciplines, is well established. The Australian Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) was inaugurated as the National Health-Care Committee of the Society in 1989. Since then, AMIA has undertaken the joint overseeing of various IT initiatives in health in the ACS.

With this in mind, it is appropriate that a special issue of the Australian Computer Journal (ACJ) is devoted to IT in Health-Care. Other special editions of the ACJ have focused on Education, Law and contemporary social issues — all in relation to Information Technology.

The considerable interest that this special issue on health has generated, both amongst ACS and non-ACS members, is gratifying, and an indication of the interest and quality of Health-Care informatics here. The editorial decisions have, as usual, been stringent and consistent with a refereed professional journal. Space has imposed its own constraints.

As an inaugural special issue on IT in Health, the editors have sought to strike a balance whilst casting a wide net. The articles describe the application of IT in diagnostics, therapeutics, telematics and research in Health. Their impact on clinical decision-making is discussed, together with the vital issues of security, privacy and confidentiality.

We are indebted to the contributors, referees and the joint efforts of many who have helped with preparation of this inaugural special issue on IT in Health.

Dr Patrick Nugawela

Guest Editor

Australian Medical Informatics Association

(National Health-Care Committee of the Australian Computer Society)