

# CIPScene

Canadian Information Processing Society, Calgary Section

JUNE 2003



## EXECUTIVE NOTEPAD

Mohamed Teja, I.S.P.  
President-Elect

As CIPS Calgary winds down a highly successful 2003 season, as President for the 2004 season I would like to first take this opportunity to express my sincere congratulations to Matthew Williams for his uncompromising commitment and outstanding leadership during the 2003 season. I am thankful for Matthew's commitment to continue his service as Past President.

Hats off also to the absolute strength of each individual board and committee member for the professionalism and high impact contributions that raised the bar for CIPS Calgary programs and services offered. I look forward to working with each individual continuing into the 2004 season and welcome equally strong individuals who have expressed interest in volunteering for open board positions.

As President for the 2004 season, I will commit to the following priority areas in supporting portfolio directors in achieving their goals:

1. Facilitate board level development of CIPS Calgary objectives for 2004 season in serving both the membership and the local IT community
2. Help build strong team dynamics at the board level by having us understand collective strengths and personal preferences
3. Help to identify areas of opportunity to consider in portfolio planning
4. Encourage strong outcome-based planning and delivery over activity-based planning (delivery of quality, high value programs and services over quantity).

I believe that, in order to continue to strengthen the value and impact of CIPS Calgary, the following priority areas are the foundation of the organizational success:

1. Financially sound (treasury, sponsorship, and membership)
2. Flagship knowledge and networking programs
3. Publications
4. Institutional integration (institutional partnerships with corporate, industry, community, and academic organizations)

I view other programs and services traditionally delivered by CIPS Calgary as highly valuable extensions to these foundational programs and services.

On the personal note, I am committed to professional ethics, respect for people, managing commitments, continuous improvement, and personal development. I also value a work/life balance that allows active participation in volunteering, family activities, faith-based community participation, and sports and leisure.

My involvement with CIPS Calgary includes serving past board positions as SIGs Director, External Liaison Director, and Vice President. I have been a CIPS member and supporter since 1995 and hold an I.S.P. designation.

Professionally, I am a Project Management consultant with RIS Inc. and have been professionally managing IT projects for over ten years. My career roots are in IT since 1982, with a diploma in Computer Technology from BCIT and a degree in Computing Science from Simon Fraser University. Calgary has been home since 1988, when my wife Narmin and I moved here to begin our careers. We have since had an addition to the family, with our daughter Ruhee, who is now almost ten.

Have a great summer and look forward to fabulous programs and services being planned by your board for the coming season! Happy bar-b-que-ing! ☺

## CIPS CALGARY PLATINUM SPONSORS



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## **CIPScene**

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**The June Luncheon has been cancelled. CIPS monthly luncheons will resume in September 2003.**

# Technology Economics

Blake Kanewischer, Publications Director

A common refrain in this technologically-enabled age is that we, as a society, have less leisure and relationship time than we would like—usually because we spend too much time at work or engaged in "productive" activities.

One of the key ways in which nations grow and improve their economic standings is through increased efficiency in usage of the means of production (capital, labour, and land). This can occur in several ways: improved education, improved access to and use of technology, or improved transportation and infrastructure developments.

However, Canada is not seeing an increase in economic productivity; in fact, measured over the past ten years, Canada's economic productivity has declined vis-à-vis other OECD and G-7 nations, despite the widespread introduction of technology throughout Canadian industry.

The Canadian government and its provincial and municipal counterparts have made the introduction and effective usage of information technology a cornerstone of their respective competitive strategies.

There are three ways in which we can explain the declining productivity metrics in Canada, even in the face of increasing investment in technology. The first is that technology and productivity operate on about a ten to fifteen year lag from each other. The second is that technology provides only incremental gains in measurable productivity over the long run. Finally, technology, to a degree, has a negative impact on productivity, due to its ineffective management.

It is commonly noted that there has been a significant increase in technology spending since the mid to late 1980s. Some industries report as much as a 30 – 50% increase in technology spending. However, those same industries (primarily secondary industries) have not experienced even a one-for-one productivity gain.

A common reason for this is technology and productivity demonstrating the aforementioned ten to fifteen year lag with respect to each other—that is, increases in

technology will result in increases in productivity some time after the original investment in the technology.

Why is this? There are two basic reasons: one is the "network effect," or the idea that the value of a "networked" device (the term is used in a broader sense here) increases with the square of the number of devices in a network. Thus, as technology (especially communications technology) spreads, it becomes more and more valuable later on in its spread—which triggers a productivity boost.

The second reason technology and productivity have a shifted relationship to each other is that technology often impedes productivity in the short to medium term; it is only in the long haul that technology truly shines.

A second major reason that technology doesn't show up in the productivity statistics is that technology provides incremental productivity enhancements. This is a simple logical statement. Human capital is the most reliable long-term source of productivity gains.

G-7 and OECD countries, as a general rule, are doing far more to maximize their human capital inputs and outputs than non-G-7 and non-OECD countries. Education participation rates and attainment rates in Canada are among the highest in the world.

When human capital measures are maximized, it then becomes important to seek a competitive advantage in one of the other two means of production. Since land and natural resources are generally fixed, the remaining means of production is technology.

Thus, by focusing on technology, only incremental gains can be made in terms of overall productivity. With that in mind, if technology is the differentiating factor between two otherwise similar nations, then certainly it should have a corresponding amount of influence on productivity.

Finally, one of the most pervasive reasons that technology does not have an impact on productivity

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 7...**

## CIPS CALGARY GOLD SPONSORS



New Trends in eSecurity

## CIPS from a Small Section Perspective

The CIPS Red Deer Section has focused on a few select areas:

**1. Holding regularly scheduled monthly dinner meetings.** These provide opportunities for members to network and to hear about current Information Technology (IT) topics. Our year runs from September to June. To date this year, we have had the following events:

- Allan Lo, P.Eng. M.Eng. - Alberta Transportation  
*Intelligent Transportation Systems*
- Adele McDonald - Pangaea Systems Inc.  
*What's Your Website Done for You Lately?*
- Tour of Daimler - Chrysler Plant
- James Hills - Anduro Technologies  
*The Power of Search Engine Marketing*
- Wayne Peters  
*Active Directory, Windows, and Exchange 2K*
- Brent Gannon - TELUS Geomatics  
*Grande Prairie Emergency Medical Services GIS*
- Mark Cleverdon - EIT West  
*Rural Broadband and Wireless Technologies*
- Charles Wordsworth - CIPS National President  
*Professionalism*

CIPS Red Deer gives thanks to Shyla Varghese for being its Program Director this year.

**2. Attracting new members to the CIPS organization.** This year's CIPS Red Deer Section President, Simon Catherall, has made two presentations to the Computer System Technology

(C.S.T.) program at Red Deer College. Due in large part to the activities of our student representative, Lynn Cain, we have good student participation with our section.

**3. Maintaining a financially sound CIPS Red Deer Section.** Keeping us up-to-date on the financial affairs of our section is Dan Newton, I.S.P., Section Treasurer.

**4. Actively supporting the I.S.P. and CIPS Alberta** with Devki Nair being a member of the CIPS Alberta Board representing, in particular, Red Deer I.S.P.s.

The upcoming CIPS Red Deer Section events include:

- Ron Baugh of Superior Systems Consulting is sponsoring each student member at our monthly dinner meetings. As a result, student members are charged just \$5.00 to attend.
- Nominations for next year's President and Executive are being taken now. From those members elected to the Executive, a Treasurer, Program Director, Communications Director, and Membership Director will be appointed. Nominations closed on Tuesday, April 29, 2003. Please contact Mark Boothby at [markb@city.red-deer.ab.ca](mailto:markb@city.red-deer.ab.ca) for more information.
- We are thinking about trying something new in May. Rather than getting an outside speaker, we are asking three Red Deer College Computer System Technology (C.S.T.) students to make presentations on their projects at the May dinner meeting. This should be a win-win situation. The audience will learn about some current topics and the students will have the chance to practice their presentation skills, as well as get in front of potential employers.
- The CIPS Red Deer Section Golf Tournament and Annual General Meeting will be taking place on June 14th at the Balmoral Golf Club. Everyone is welcome. Please register at [www.cips.ca/reddeer](http://www.cips.ca/reddeer). Anyone wishing to volunteer his/her time or sponsor a prize, please contact Diana Balkwill at [dbalkwill@rdpsd.ab.ca](mailto:dbalkwill@rdpsd.ab.ca). Thank you. ☺



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## Good Things are Growing with IT in Agriculture

Farmers are reaping the benefits of IT, now that computer technology is becoming more affordable. The number of farmers with PCs and Internet access in their households is increasing and larger farming operations are using IT to manage fields more precisely.

### PCs and the Internet

Internet access is one of the most affordable technologies adopted on farmsteads. Email and messaging allows people to communicate easily and quickly with family and friends, helping to make rural areas less isolated. Farmers can check market prices for commodities, conduct business, and buy farm equipment online. Many agricultural websites promote community among farmers and allow people to share ideas, questions, and answers with other farmers around the world.

While high-speed Internet is becoming common in urban areas, most farms still have dial-up connections. Cable connections are expensive to install and have not expanded into many rural areas. As Internet applications and expectations increase, the number of high-speed connections on farms will also increase. The convenience of cable will bring the speed of existing Internet functions for farmers closer to urban standards.

Farmers are self-employed and must operate their farms as any other business. Financial planning software records expenses and bills, and helps keep finances on track. Crop management software records crop rotations and helps farmers analyze crop profitability throughout the current year and into the immediate future.

### Precision Farming

Non-farmers tend to think of a field as a single unit, sometimes failing to recognize that soil quality and crop yield can vary greatly within a field. Precision farming is the practice of adjusting production inputs to best utilize the special characteristics of smaller sections within a field. Traditional farming practices average the characteristics of a field and apply the same production inputs across all sections. Inputs include seeds, irrigation water, herbicides, and fertilizers. To map and manage a field is costly and only larger farms tend to have the capital to invest in such technology.

### How does precision farming work?

The backbone of precision farming is the Global Positioning System (GPS). A GPS receiver works in conjunction with mapping software, also known as a Geographic Information System (GIS). The GPS provides a constant accurate position, while the farmer performs a number of sampling techniques to determine characteristics unique to each portion of the field. When the sampling data and location is entered into the GIS, the farmer gets a detailed map showing slope, moisture, soil type, and crop yield.

Grid sampling takes soil samples in a fixed pattern across the field. Soil samples provide data such as nutrient content, moisture, soil pH, and soil texture. Field scouting measures weed and crop densities at certain points in a field during the growing season. Combining this sampling data over several years provides a more complete picture of a field and becomes a valuable investment.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 7...**



◆ ZACHMAN ◆ ROSS ◆

FEATURING THE WORLD-RENOUNDED LEADERS ON ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE AND BUSINESS RULES:

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## CIPS Student Section Year in Review

Time flies when you're working with CIPS! It's hard to believe that my term as the CIPS Student Section Chair is coming to a close at the end of the month.

Throughout this year, I have been fortunate enough to work with a very talented and cooperative CIPS board. The success of the Student Section would not have been possible without its support and assistance.

Looking back, the first CIPS student event of the year was held on September 26, 2002 at SAIT with Craig Elias as the featured industry speaker. The sold-out event was entitled *How to Network - The Secrets and Rewards of Personal Networking*. Craig emphasized a number of important points about networking, including the fact that networking works both ways. You must give back to those who helped you in the past to maintain the relationship. One of the most essential points was that your network should include people who: 1) know you; 2) like you; 3) trust you; and 4) want you to succeed.

The second student event was held on November 21, 2002 at the University of Calgary and was entitled *The CIPS Systems IT Panel Industry Night* and included a total of seven IT panel members. The panel members walked through a mock project scenario and described their duties and roles at different stages in the project lifecycle. Panel members were assigned a number of IT roles including: Systems Business Analyst, Project Manager, Programmer Analyst, QA, Network Analyst, Technical Analyst, DBA, Data Analyst, Post Implementation Support, Facilitator, and Customer. The panel members included: Dave Karbashewski, Peter Whitehead, Nimira Kurji, Darren Bayda, Maria Anderson, Marion Ng, and myself.

Catherine Brownlee, who is the CEO and President of Prominent Personnel (a Calgary based Executive Head Hunting Firm), was the industry speaker for the third CIPS student event and was held on January 23, 2003 at DeVry. Ms. Brownlee discussed how to write effective resumes and cover letters, and the significance of choosing your references wisely. One

of the Ms. Brownlee's most important points was that you must be aware of your weaknesses because not being aware is your biggest weakness.

Finally, the fourth CIPS student event featured Ted Barnicoat I.S.P., who is the CIO of Trimac Transportation Corporation. It was held on March 13, 2003 at SAIT. The focus of the student event addressed the questions: What does a CIO really do? Is it a job to aspire to? Mr. Barnicoat enlightened students about his job functions as a CIO and the significance of the role in most major IT companies. Ted emphasized the fact that the job of a CIO is not technical but is actually to increase business value at the lowest cost. Most importantly, a CIO must have humility, energy to inspire others to succeed, and finally have a sense of humour to deal with outrageous situations.

I would like to again thank all of the industry speakers who participated in the CIPS student events over the past year. I have received much praise from students as well as other industry employees applauding the quality of the speakers and the relevance of the material presented. I would also like to thank Shilo Beechinor (Social Director), Leon Cygman (Academic Liaison), and Stephanie Hiebert (Membership Director) for their continued support with organizing the student events. Stuart Quinn (CIO Liaison) and Marion Ng were also instrumental in making the CIPS involvement in the CSUS (U of C Computer Science Undergraduate Society) Career Fair possible in March. Lastly, I would like to thank all of the students who came to the student events this year and were able to take advantage of the chance to interface with industry and expand your skills set. For details about upcoming CIPS events, check out the website at: [www.cips.ca/calgary](http://www.cips.ca/calgary). In addition, if any of you executives out there are looking for a new graduate in Computer Science from the University of Calgary, please feel free to contact me at my new email contact address: [christianleith@yahoo.com](mailto:christianleith@yahoo.com). If you have any questions about the CIPS Student Section, feel free to contact me at my new contact email address as well. ☛

is that it is mismanaged. Some examples spring to mind readily.

Many companies, whether through mergers, acquisitions, or even sheer size, have multiple (incompatible) email and calendaring systems. How much productivity is wasted trying to get the systems to communicate with each other (if they are inter-operable at all)?

A second common issue is the application of technology as a solution without fully examining if it is the solution to the problem. Technologists are often guilty of this—technology cum panacea is the dominant worldview.

Technology can be a sinkhole if not well-managed. It is incumbent upon the technologists to ensure that it is aligned with the business.

In short, technology and productivity are not intrinsically linked for a variety of reasons. The lag between technology introduction and productivity gains is significant; technology is not a key component of productivity; and technology can be mismanaged easily.

Think carefully before assuming that technology will automatically result in productivity gains, whether on a macro scale or a micro scale. ☹️

### **How does a farmer use the sampling data?**

The GPS and GIS database of field information is integrated into a machine specially equipped to supply a variable rate of production inputs, such as a sprayer. As the sprayer travels over sections of the field, the amount of chemical is automatically adjusted to apply only the required amount of chemical according to the information stored in the GIS database.

A harvester equipped with a GPS and a yield monitor allow a farmer to monitor how much crop is being harvested at any point in the field. Updating the GIS database with yield information creates a yield map that shows high and low crop yields for each section of the field. A farmer can then adjust the production inputs for lower yielding sections of the field to increase productivity for that section during the next harvest.

Applying production inputs more precisely reduces the amount of chemicals used on a crop while promoting maximum yield. Knowing the potential of smaller sections of land within a field allows farmers to achieve a balance between greater productivity and sustainability. ☺️

*Suzanne Kaprowski*  
*suzkap@canada.com*

## **WHAT IS CIPS?**

**CIPS is a group of professionals from all areas of IT. We offer the only IT professional designation (the I.S.P.) in Canada. Our events, including regular seminars, luncheons, and conferences, are dedicated to promoting continuous learning and networking opportunities. Through learning from other like-minded professionals, we are able to stay ahead in this fast-paced industry.**

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## **CIPS CALGARY SILVER SPONSORS**





## CIPS Calgary Section

Future Meeting Dates – 11:30 am

Wednesday, June 4, 2003 CANCELLED

*All meetings are held at the  
Calgary Chamber of Commerce  
4th Floor, 517 Centre Street South*

### CIPS Events

June 3, 2003     **CIPS CALGARY ANNUAL GOLF  
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# BOARD PORTFOLIOS – CIPS CALGARY



**Blake Kanewischer**  
Publications Director

It's the last issue of the year – this is cause for celebration! Well, on some fronts, at least. As the Publications Director/Editor for CIPS Calgary for the 2002/03 year, I

have been privileged to work with an outstanding team that deserves the credit for the incredible work they have accomplished.

I would like to thank the team at Associations Plus who makes this publication work behind the scenes: Pamela Wilson, Alison Ramsay, Kati Murphy, and Katherine Thielmann. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of Marnie Juel Shaw who, once again, reprised her role as a proofreader this year.

Of course, this year marked the authoring debuts of three outstanding students from Mount Royal College: Suzanne Kaprowski, Jolene Fleming, and Anindita Mukherjee. Their articles really livened up the newsletter and made it a more enjoyable read.

Of course, no recap of the year would be complete without mentioning one of the most significant changes for *CIPScene* – the shift to a totally electronic format. This was a difficult decision in some

ways, but I believe it has been a success. The feedback from our readership has been overwhelmingly positive.

After some arm-twisting from two board members - who shall remain unnamed to protect their secret wrestling identities - I have agreed to remain as the Publications Director for the 2003-05 term.

Next year, I am hoping to renew the CIPS Calgary relationship with Mount Royal College's applied communications program, as well as continuing to expand the newsletter content.

If you have any suggestions, comments, or ideas for what you would like to see in next year's newsletters, please don't hesitate to email me at [blakek@cips.ca](mailto:blakek@cips.ca) or give me a call at 268-5520.

See you in September! ☺

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