Harcourt worked for the OTC for 25 years and his volume is supported by OTC. On their behalf Allen and Unwin have produced a very elegant book. Co-operation between OTC and Harcourt has allowed the world access to a unique body of material. The weight of research which underlies Harcourt's study will ensure that it remains an important reference in the field of international telecommunications for many years.

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The Organisational Implications of Computer Technology for Professional Work
by Stephen E. Little
(Gower Publishing, Aldershot, 1988) pp. xvii + 199, cloth $39.50, ISBN 0 566 05454 X

As the area of application of information technology (IT) spreads from less mundane aspects of our existence into areas previously regarded as esoteric, specialised or sacrosanct, questions are raised about the nature of the technology, its impact on routine existence and the extent to which the technology has developed from a tool to become a determining factor of contemporary life.

Stephen Little's book is one of several recent publications aimed at illuminating these issues, but rather than merely seeking to offer a grand sweep across such areas of concern, he concentrates for the most part on a specific profession and the incorporation, acceptance, and adoption of a particular technological form. His focus is the architecture profession; the technology, computer aided design (CAD), more specifically computer aided architectural design (CAAD).

This focus, however, is extended in the opening four chapters to cover a wider range of issues including organisational theory, the nature of professional ideology and cultural assumptions, an overview of the foundation of the post-war welfare consensus in the UK, and the role of power in organisational structure and process. This would amount to a major project for a text in theoretical social science, let alone as an extended introduction. So it is not too surprising that one is left bemused, and not quite as enlightened as perhaps the author would wish his readership to be in order to progress to the next sections.

The overall aim of the opening chapters is to lay the basis for a model which will be employed in the analysis of the case studies which constitute the major portion of the text. Unfortunately, the scope, shape and basis of the model is difficult to extract from the arguments of the first four chapters. A bewildering array of authorities and references is introduced, not always with the effect of clarifying the direction in which the overall argument is progressing. A number of figures and diagrams are included, but if anything I found them unhelpful

and confusing. The author's grasp of the material on organisational structure, social theory, CAD, and different research methods is commendable. But it is sometimes displayed without reference to a specific purpose within the confines of his argument. (He is also repetitious: I counted at least four different paraphrases of the same argument by Giddens.)

The real focus of the book only emerges in Part Two, where the individual case studies are described. Here Little seeks to apply his model. The analysis underlying the narrative description of the case studies is aimed at two hypotheses stated in chapter 5. The first declaring that:

> The development of computer-aided architecture design techniques in a professional bureaucracy under conditions of stable environment will be associated with the extension of control through the standardisation of work processes. (p. 88)

The second:

> The development of computer-aided architecture design techniques in a professional bureaucracy under conditions of complex and dynamic environment will be associated with the development of sophisticated technical repsones to environmental uncertainty. (p. 88)

These are, one must suppose, mutually obverse: this is not explicitly stated. Little develops the position with reference to a housing association, a regional health authority, and an architectural department of a county council. That they are all in the public sector provides a common basis against which other significant disparities can emerge. Whether they are all in similar positions with regard to adoption and use of IT is not specified. The model developed in Part One is used in the context of the case studies, thereby illuminating (slightly) the earlier, more general arguments. The detail is interesting, but the strength of the conclusions remains unconvincing, especially as Stephen Little himself states at the end that the analysis of the case studies bears out the hypotheses. But since he fails to proffer any other contending explanations or counter-hypotheses, this is not very convincing.

This failure to consider any contending arguments is compounded by the omission of any mention of Nolan's work regarding the maturation of control and management of IT in organisations, and the large literature which developed in response to Nolan's original papers in the early 1970s.[1]

It is also strange that there is no mention of the variety of other forms of IT which could be present in the organisational contexts within which CAAD is utilised, any of which could be influential. Indeed, at times CAAD seems to become conflated with other forms of IT such as electronic mail, office automation, and so on. At others, CAAD seems to exist in a vacuum rather than as a specialised part of more general IT facilities. It is possible that such technical details were truncated for lack of space; if this is the case, it provides further argument for a shorter section preceding the details of the case studies themselves.

Overall the text addresses important issues, but the author appears to have been over ambitious in seeking to incorporate the large range of issues and concerns introduced in Part One. Not only could this have been considerably reduced in scope and complexity, but perhaps other (more relevant) material could have been substituted.

We can all agree that consideration of non-technical aspects of computing are ineluctable in any informed investigation of the developments around IT. But merely mentioning an array of sources does not equate with the articulation of a perspective incorporating their arguments. The text offers a useful reminder

that consideration of organisational aspects of IT cannot simply treat the organisation as an internally structured grouping of employees. The mores of professional bodies are a good example of additional factors which need to be accounted for by software professionals in systems development. For this alone, the book is to be commended, but as a source of carefully gathered detail, rather than as a framework for understanding.

REFERENCE

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Strategic Trade Policy and the New International Economics *edited by Paul Krugman*
(MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987) pp. x + 313, ISBN 0-262-11112-8

The editor of this volume has collected eleven papers and provided an introduction on the pros and cons of strategic trade policy, which can also be called neo-mercantilism. The 'new' international economics, a rebuttal of the Smith-Ricardo case for free trade which was based on perfect competition, centres on the 'real world' of imperfect competition, economies of scale, technological advances, and other features of the modern economic environment. To most authors, it is a product in international economics of the 1980s and there is no mention in the book of the pioneering contributions to trade theory in the late 1960s of such people as Posner, Linder, Hufbauer, Vernon, and their followers.

Nevertheless, non-perfect competition is now in the ascendency and the outdated ideas previously incorporated in international economic theory of efficiency and equity on a worldwide basis have been submerged under the so-called need for every nation to obtain the maximum benefits to be derived from world trade, at the expense of its trading partners. The new theory is based upon the assumption that, although free trade may be the most appropriate policy to follow in a world of perfect competition, it is not so in a world of imperfect competition. There is no proof anywhere in the book that this is so. The proponents of strategic trade policy argue that there are great benefits to be derived from economies of scale, oligopolistic production, external economies, and a mercantilistic attitude towards the rest of the world. Indeed, many of the changes which have occurred in international trade in the last twenty years support such a policy, especially in the case of Japan.

The theory predicts that if a firm or industry undertakes aggressive foreign marketing, it can gain a greater share of the profits to be earned by the worldwide industry for itself and at the expense of its foreign counterparts. By expanding production, a firm can increase its efficiency by sliding down its average cost curve as it reaps economics of scale and, in this way, the whole economy can be more efficient, especially if the output expansion provides external economies