

IJCIR: A New Beacon of African ICT Research

Prof. Joseph M. Kizza*, Editor-in-Chief

Department of Computer Science and Engineering,

The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, Tennessee, 37403, USA.

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I am happy to be writing this short note for the maiden and at the same time an issue of the new journal, the *International Journal of Computing and ICT Research*. This is a new journal being launched by Makerere University to highlight new research developments, experiences and best practices in the use of information communications technology (ICT) across Africa. Wide dissemination of these issues to African scholars and African developmentists contributes greatly to the steady process in the acquisition, development, and use of ICT in Africa.

For Africa's acquisition and development of information technology (IT), the journey from there to now has not been without problems. There, at the dawn of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Africa's technological imprints were but non-starters compared to the giant steps that were being taken in the rest of the world. Throughout the continent, ICT capacity and infrastructure were low and in some places non-existent, and equipment acquisition was sporadic and unplanned. However, Africans were just deprived not disabled. African leading universities and institutions set themselves on a quest to be the ICT incubators and jump start ICT education and research and build ICT capacity to help in the construction of the badly needed infrastructure. For these institutions and everybody else involved in the quest for technological advance, the climb to the top of the technological mountain has been steep. However, with the typical African determination, they are inching on to the top.

Twenty years into the climb, there are signs everywhere that the early efforts are beginning to bear fruits. Everywhere in Africa today, one witnesses exuberance, soaring interest, especially of the young, an increasing inventory of working ICT equipment, an increasing number of confident and young ICT technocrats, an unbelievably large number of young people taking courses in information technology and a growing number of governments believing more in ICT as a tool for development. The African technological acquisition, though still low by international standards, driven mostly by an unprecedented indigenous interest in technological development and the numerous and sometimes ambitious initiatives by NGOs and the donor community, is changing the fortunes of Africa, quickly leapfrogging her into the 21st Century with rapid development not seen in generations. The long awaited African technological dawn may be in sight.

To maintain this new found exuberance for ICT and to speed up the process of ICT development and capacity building, Makerere University, in Uganda, one of the leaders in ICT education in Africa is launching a new journal. The *International Journal of Computing and ICT Research* (IJCIR): <http://www.ijcir.org> is a peer reviewed International journal anchored by Makerere University. Its objectives are to provide a medium for ICT scholars and practitioners, from around the world but more so

* Author's Address: Joseph M. Kizza, Department of Computer Science and Engineering,

The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN 37403, USA., Joseph-kizza@utc.edu.

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from Africa, to publish original and cutting edge research in the field of computing and ICT, to create an environment that encourages ICT scholars, especially Africanists, to collaborate on projects that can result in African development, to bring African scholarship in ICT to the rest of the world and to build the badly needed capacity in African scholarship. The Journal, like its sister conference, The Annual International Conference on Computing and ICT Research, will accept papers in computer science, computer engineering, software engineering, data communications and computer networks, information systems, information technology and ICT for sustainable development and other related areas.

In this maiden issue, we have a collection of 9 papers covering a broad range of interests in Computing and ICT issues in Africa. These papers are coming from every corner of Africa and beyond, giving the journal an extended domain of researchers and practitioners to draw expertise from and to disseminate, grow and fertilize with new ideas and techniques.

The papers are divided into seven tracks: computer science, computer engineering, software engineering, data communications and computer networks, information systems, information technology and ICT for sustainable development. While I will not discuss each paper appearing here, I can assure you that each and every paper in this journal goes right to the core of the objectives of the journal. I call on you to relax and enjoy this and future issues of the journal.