Special Editors' Note

Ernest J. Wilson III
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Like many ambitious projects, *ITID* was born out of frustration. In this case, the frustration Mike and Ernie shared about the lack of rigorous academic discourse at the intersection of information technologies and development. To gain respect in the academy, our nascent field needed a venue where claims about impact would be carefully vetted through a process respected by both computer scientists and social scientists, yet directly relevant to the concerns of policymakers, nongovernmental organizations, funding agencies, and commercial enterprises.

Coming from two distinct perspectives, Mike, a computer scientist, and Ernie, a political economist, took on the challenge and teamed up to create such a venue. In the Fall of 2003, the *ITID* journal was launched. Had they known how much hard work this would be, they might not have done it. Indeed, it was quite an effort to simultaneously attract intrepid authors willing to take a chance on a startup outlet, to raise funds, to convince a highly respected press to publish the journal, to assemble a stellar advisory board, and to enlist dedicated reviewers from around the world. During these early years and through all the growing pains, Mike excelled at task after task with hard work, dedication, and good humor. He deserves enormous credit for pulling this off and making *ITID* what it is today. In hindsight, it was clearly worth the effort.

Mike's contributions to *ITID* are too numerous to list here (and we don't want to make him blush), but three, in particular, stand out. First, Mike's deep expertise in computer science has allowed him to rally the support of the information technologies community behind the *ITID* project. Without his stellar credentials, from his PhD work at the MIT Media Lab to his faculty position at Georgia Tech, the journal would not have gained the respect it currently enjoys among technology experts.

Second, Mike's dedication to addressing development issues is grounded in extensive time spent on the ground, from his service in India as Director of Media Lab Asia and involvement with the SARI project, to his work in Africa including Liberia, Ghana, and Nigeria. Never a technology determinist, Mike brought to the journal a profound understanding of the practical circumstances within which information technologies could (and sometimes could not) be successfully deployed. Without his intimate knowledge of the real world, *ITID* would not benefit practitioners nor claim the relevance it now has for funders and policymakers.

Third, and perhaps dearest to his heart, Mike brought to *ITID* a vision of radical accessibility. In his mind, to be true to its goals, the journal had to be free and openly accessible. Mike played a key role in convincing MIT Press to make *ITID* its first open access journal. When the time came to part ways

with MIT Press and move the publishing home to Annenberg, he led the effort to move *ITID* to the Open Journal System (OJS) and convinced the Georgia Tech Library to provide hosting and technical support. To truly serve and promote development, he believed *ITID* content had to be free and readily accessible to all readers, especially in poorer countries where university libraries cannot afford pricey academic subscriptions. Without his uncompromising commitment to accessibility, *ITID* would not be in a position to foster the growth of local researchers in all regions of the world.

So it is with deep appreciation for your contributions, Mike, that we promote you to emeritus status. We would be very sad to see you move on if we didn't know that you remain only a phone call or e-mail away, willing to help. And we know the transition will be smooth as we welcome Kentaro Toyama, who steps in as Co-Editor-in-Chief.

In friendship,

Ernest J. Wilson III
Founding Editor-in-Chief

François Bar
Editor-in-Chief