Editorial

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Introduction

Within hours of learning about Claudio Ciborra's death, the Department of Information Systems was receiving many e-mails from his friends and colleagues around the world, expressing their shock and sadness that such a special person had been taken from us. These messages were collected and put on a special website (http://is.lse.ac.uk/InMemoryOfClaudio/default.htm). Within a week, over a dozen pages of tributes and memories had been added.

Reading these comments, it became clear that, as Lucas Introna so beautifully puts it in his piece in this special issue, Claudio was 'so much more than these descriptions'. For every comment that discussed an aspect of Claudio's life and work that you could recognise from your own interactions with him (his love of life, of good food, of dancing; his dislike of superficial accounts and 2×2 grids, his conceptual elegance and curiosity that led him to alternative intellectual paths and the exploration of concepts like bricolage, tinkering and gestell), there was another that revealed a side of Claudio that you were not familiar with or had not appreciated fully.

Claudio's nomadic lifestyle (at least until he 'settled down' in London) also meant that these contributions were coming from all over the world and from very different groups of people (colleagues he had collaborated with, students he had taught, researchers he had inspired, friends and family), which also added to the rich mix of pieces. Claudio not only was a leading academic but also a catalyst of interactions, both intellectual and human related. When Leslie Willcocks was first introduced to Claudio, Claudio quickly responded that he knew him already – 'he is one of my tribe'. In our different ways, we all feel privileged to have been in the same tribe as Claudio. This special issue contains the reflections from some members of this tribe.

The special issue arose in response to these many contributions and in part reflected our own realisation that Claudio had meant so much more to us than we had realised. The department at LSE was particularly struck by his absence. At one of the first research seminars held after his death, the gap that Claudio left was palpable. We could all imagine how he would have responded to the presentation, we knew the kinds of challenging questions he would have put to the speaker and could hear him questioning why his own work in the area had not been acknowledged and used. Carsten Sorensen has suggested that, using a footballing metaphor, Claudio's contributions to such sessions were often hard tackles, but also that you knew that every time he was going for the ball not the player.

Organising the special issue

Claudio was very much a man of ideas, grounded in both theory and practice, and the *Journal of Information Technology* is organising a special issue that seeks to develop Claudio's intellectual legacy. This special issue of EJIS, therefore, was designed to complement that special issue and focussed on personal reflections on Claudio's life and work. As such, we

sought 'a broad range of reflections from individuals and groups who were influenced by him and his work'. We sought 'to receive reflections that discuss Claudio's influence on the intellectual development of his friends, mentors, peers and protégés'. We were looking for contributions from those who were directly influenced in their work by meeting Claudio and hearing him speak, but equally by those who only read his words.

The call for papers was announced in late June 2006 and the intention was that we would produce the issue within 1 year of Claudio's death. This meant that we required papers to be submitted (initially) by early August. Thanks to the support of the EJIS editorial office, especially Carolyn Bailey and Neela Rungien, who were prepared to be incredibly flexible for us, we were able to extend the deadline until the end of September and still have it appear within this time scale.

We requested shorter pieces (typically 1000–3000 words) and each piece went through a fast-tracked academic peer review process guided by a light editorial touch to those submissions that need them. We felt that added humour and honesty would be entirely appropriate to the honour of Claudio and what he personally stood for.

The papers

In total, we received 29 papers, from around the world. As we had hoped, these were from people he had worked with on academic as well as administrative matters. They consisted of personal reflections of Claudio the man as well as ones that focused on the ways in which Claudio's ideas had influenced the contributor's academic development and research. We are also pleased to include Ray's review of Claudio's last book: The Labyrinths of Information (OUP, 2002).

The process of reviewing the submissions was particularly challenging, not only because the papers were not 'traditional' academic papers but also because each one reminded us of Claudio's influence on the lives and work of an international body of researchers.

Our general policy was one of inclusion, seeking to embrace the diversity of views and influences that Claudio had on the community, and we were able to accept all the submissions we received. We limited our recommendations to issues of clarity and expression (especially for non-native speakers) and, in a few cases, raised some points that we asked the authors to reflect upon in revising their text.

Claudio always taught us that top-down control is often far less effective than bottom-up, improvised action and the order of the papers follows this principle. We start with a series of contributions that are primarily personal reflections of Claudio the man. These gradually drift into personal reflections that also relate to specific academic ideas that Claudio developed. The later papers focus more on the influence that Claudio's academic contributions have had on researchers. The issue ends with the stories of two papers that Claudio was working on during his illness showing Claudio's contributions and highlighting the influence of both Claudio's personality and academic insights.

The special issue opens with the formal obituary issued by Claudio's fellow Professors of Information Systems and includes the photograph from the memorial website. We end the special issue with a photograph of Claudio expressing his delight at finding a street sign that commemorated one of his academic heroes.