

Editorial

There are four research papers in this issue. The first addresses an issue that was more common in the pages of *Prometheus* two or three decades ago, information policy. Then the focus was on the need for government policy to cater for such an important resource as information. Now the need for such policy is not in dispute. Nor is the complementary role of the information strategy of organisations. Jenny Stewart's paper is concerned not with policy for information, but rather with information for policy. In what she presents as an exploratory study, Stewart makes explicit ideas about the role of information that are implicit in much public policy theory. She explores how information is used for what she calls 'meaning-making' in public policy, and how analysis and consequent better understanding of this process might make for better public policy.

Prometheus has published several papers from Africa in recent years and we would like to publish more. This issue contains a short paper by Ramazan Uctu and Hassan Essop examining the development of the South African biotechnology industry. For those accustomed to viewing high technology from a European or North American perspective, it may come as a surprise that there is a South African biotechnology industry. The established academic and policy tradition is to advocate high technology as a solution to the world's development problems. Little attention has been paid to how most of the world manages to use high technology to solve these problems. Uctu and Essop look at the performance of the South African biotechnology industry and consider how appropriate has been the government policy on which the industry depends. The South African government is trying to base the industry on local research and development. Whether this ambition will ever be realized seems to depend on whether the South African biotechnology industry can be internationally competitive.

The paper by Hwanho Choi and Bernard Burnes is nothing if not topical. It examines the innovations that have overwhelmed the modern music industry. The internet has changed totally the way music is distributed, with knock-on effects throughout the music industry. The handful of large companies that dominated the international music industry for decades has not shown the flexibility required to deal with such rapid and radical change. The companies have suffered accordingly. It would be difficult to find more stark evidence that the corporate world pays absolutely no attention to academic theory. Choi and Burnes look at an important aspect of what these companies have ignored, the new relationship between producers and consumers, where value is created not simply by producers for customers, but by music companies, musicians and fans operating together. The explication has come too late for the dinosaurs among the music labels, but others have much to learn from the music entrepreneurs of the developing world, long suppressed by a combination of vested interests, intellectual property rights and a complacent conviction that the creative industries do not have to be creative at all.

Most papers in *Prometheus* consider innovation in terms of government policy or organisational strategy, usually from an information perspective. Our last paper in this issue, the paper by Richard Blundel and David Smith, is very different: the innovation is actually a restoration of what once existed. The subject is cheese and the analysis is of the resurrection of farmhouse cheese through the assertion of artisanal knowledge. After the second world war, the United Kingdom's milk marketing board imposed a general and stultifying uniformity on the country's dairy industry. Stalinesque production systems focussed on cheese quantity rather than cheese quality, and only the survival of traditional methods in a few small companies prevented a dreadful mediocrity suffocating the whole industry. It is the reassertion of artisanal knowledge that has allowed the current flourishing of variety and quality in the cheese industry. Anglo Saxon innovation policy and management methods have shown little interest in artisanal knowledge, except, perhaps, to castigate it as an obstacle to innovation. Innovation theory and practise have a deal to learn from cheese.

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