



PREFACE

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 9th Annual EuSpRIG conference.

David Chadwick, one of the three founding members of EuSpRIG, has recently been unwell and has indicated that he may not be able to attend this conference. We wish him a rapid recovery and look forward to his valuable contributions to the group.

I am grateful to Pat O'Beirne for his four years service as previous chair, and look forward to being able to continue to move our work forward over the coming few years. I thank David Ball for his period of service as our Treasurer and send our condolences that his circumstances mean that he cannot continue. I thank David Colver for picking up the threads as our new Treasurer. Thanks to Pat Cleary for his organisational skills and David Ward for printing the proceedings. I thank also our other diligent committee members who meet regularly by teleconference to further the work of the group. I welcome and thank our sponsors, Spreadsheet Safe, for their valuable contribution this year.

Since being elected chair, I have also had the good fortune to join Trintech (UK) Ltd who promote a range of governance and compliance solutions in the European marketplace, including, of course, an enterprise spreadsheet management product. As a result I have had the opportunity to gain a deep insight into what is going on in the Spreadsheet Management and Compliance sector.

The influence that EuSpRIG has had over the years is quite remarkable. We have motivated an entire marketplace to move towards solving the inherent problems of spreadsheets in business critical situations. Our influence on the audit profession has been successful. The audit profession, in healthy self-interest, has decided that signing off corporate accounts where there is reliance upon untested spreadsheets is a very bad idea. The Financial Services Authority has also figured out that spreadsheets are a big problem and is bearing down heavily on some very large financial institutions. It is quite frightening to learn that most household name institutions still don't know where all their important spreadsheets are, let alone how they relate to the integrity of their financial systems and processes. The relationship between the present credit crunch and spreadsheets could be an interesting, though difficult, area of research.

We are thus in the early days of getting the spreadsheet problem fixed in big business. It has taken ten years of coordinated effort to have achieved widespread international recognition that spreadsheets are a problem. It will take another ten years, I estimate, to reach the mid point where half of the significant global institutions have their spreadsheets under some form of control.

David Chadwick had intended to speak on the role of EuSpRIG in Education and Training. Having established our credentials in the business sector, I think that we need to follow David's lead and start influencing the educational sector more. It would seem remarkable that business schools, departments of computer science and departments of information technology have little awareness



of the spreadsheet problem, despite requiring students to use them all the time for numeric coursework.

To improve the awareness of EuSpRIG's work and to make it more accessible, I have spent many hours uploading historical EuSpRIG papers onto the Cornell University moderated repository www.arxiv.org. About 80% of the papers that can be uploaded have now been uploaded so that there is a good chance of finding what you want – simply search for “spreadsheet” or the author's name. By referencing papers on Arxiv in future papers, marketing pieces and articles I hope that we can recruit more interested parties into our scientific discipline. An Arxiv index will appear on the website soon.

Over the coming year I am hoping to change the legal status of EuSpRIG into a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The former will give the directors and officers the protection of limited liability which is appropriate given the voluntary nature of their duties. The latter reflects our charitable status in that all the work we do is voluntary and of an international and educational nature. These two actions, properly pursued, may help us to raise funds to further our work. Next years meeting is of course the 10th conference and our constitution requires a biennial AGM at that time. It would seem appropriate to tie together that important anniversary with a consolidation of our legal status.

At a strategy meeting in November 2007, most of the committee met and contemplated the groups purpose and focus. As a result we adopted the following text which we have since used to guide us:

“EuSpRIG offers Risk Managers the world's only independent, authoritative & comprehensive web based information describing the current state of the art in Spreadsheet Risk Management. We run a well-established annual conference which provides a forum for researchers, practitioners, trainers, vendors, consultants and auditors. We provide speakers and content for professional societies, associations, conferences and journals.”

In considering academic research work or management summaries for future conferences, please bear our Spreadsheet Risk Management focus in mind, as in future we will only publish work which principally addresses it.

A number of other action items emerged out of the strategy meeting including the upgrade of our website. I initiated one attempt at an upgrade but failed to properly brief the unfortunate individual who took it upon himself to assist us. I offer my unconditional apology for troubling him so.

The conference programme this year is as packed as ever. We have been selective in our choice of papers this year and despite this have had to split the conference into two tracks, one Application oriented and one Research oriented. We hope that this gives delegates a better use of their time and enables them to use the conference to best match their interests.



We request that you complete the delegate evaluation form as carefully and completely as you can. We hope to tie together the peer-review process which guides paper selection and rejection to delegate feedback. Your input is much appreciated.

We look forward to our sponsor's Keynote presentation on Spreadsheet Safe and Ray Panko's keynote guidance on future research directions.

Enjoy the Conference!

Kind Regards,

Grenville Croll,
EuSpRIG Chair
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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eusprig>