

Foreword

The compilation work undertaken by Frédéric Adam and Patrick Humphreys is destined to have a lasting impact on the discipline of decision support in that it provides a comprehensive survey of the decision making domain, from theory to applications.

This encyclopaedia features more than 100 articles written by over one hundred and fifty researchers from 25 countries. One remarkable feature of this work is that for the first time, a broad range of key topics, covering the theoretical bases and important concepts of the domain are presented in a very pedagogical form and in one single book to students and practitioners. At the same time, many applications of the practice of decision making in the business world are presented (multi-criteria decision making, balanced scorecard, influence diagrams...). The tools of the trade of decision support are therefore described in the context of their managerial applications, for instance, urban planning, facility management, disaster planning and recovery, etc.

Finally and crucially, the practice of decision support cannot be fully and effectively achieved without the seamless integration of information systems in the organisations they are designed to serve. Thus, numerous articles have been included that deal with leading edge intelligent DSS applications, including data warehousing, workflow automation, knowledge management, group communication and decision support, amongst others, all extremely important aspects of the cooperative work that underlies all modern organisations.

In the end, one must thank the authors and editors for undertaking this significant venture towards making available to students and managers the requisite tools, both conceptual and practical, for effective decision support. It is without doubt that readers can leverage the material presented in this encyclopaedia for the sustained benefit of their organisations. It is worth restating, in unambiguous terms, that modern management in competitive environments cannot be successful without a finely-tuned and well integrated infrastructure of information and decision support systems. It is one fundamental quality of this book that it provides a demonstration of this reality and also provides the means to concretely tackle it. Let's hope that this ensures the success which this venture deserves.

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