
Preface

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Biographical notes: Isabelle Linden is a Professor of Information Management at the University of Namur in Belgium, Department of Business Administration. She obtained her PhD in Computer Sciences from the University of Namur. She also holds Master's degrees in Philosophy and in Mathematics from the University of Liège, Belgium. She is a member of the CoordiNam Laboratory and the FoCuS Research Group. Combining theoretical computer science and business administration, her main research domain regards information, knowledge and artificial intelligence. She explores their integration within systems as EIS, DSS and BI systems. Her works can be found in several international edited books, journals, books chapters and conferences. She serves as reviewer and program committee member in several international journals, conferences and workshops.

Jason Papathanasiou is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Business Administration, University of Macedonia, Greece. He holds a PhD in Operational Research and Informatics and a degree in Physics from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He has worked for a number of years at various institutes and has organised and participated in a number of international scientific conferences and workshops. He has published papers in international scientific peer referred journals like the *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, *Regional Studies*, *European Journal of Operational Research*, *PNAS* and has participated in many research projects in FP6, FP7, Interreg and COST; he served also as a member of the TDP Panel of COST and currently serves at the coordination board of the EURO Working Group of Decision Support Systems. His research interests include decision support systems, operational research and multicriteria decision making.

Marko Bohanec is a Research Councillor at the Jožef Stefan Institute, Department of Knowledge Technologies, Ljubljana, Slovenia, and a Professor of Computer Science at the University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia. His research interests lie in the areas of decision support systems, decision analysis, decision modelling, artificial intelligence, machine learning and data mining. His special focus is on qualitative multi-criteria modelling, where he co-authored a method DEX and supporting software DEXi. In recent years, he has been involved as a decision support expert in several European projects on genetically modified crops, food control, and healthcare.

This *IJIDS* special issue on ‘analytics for decision support’ includes extended and revised versions of papers selected from the First International Conference on Decision Support Systems Technology (ICDSST 2015) organised in Belgrade, Serbia, between 27th and 29th May, and the 27th EURO Conference – DSS Stream held between 12th and 15th July 2015 in Glasgow. The ICDSST Conference and the DSS stream of EURO were organised by the EURO Working Group on Decision Support Systems (EWG-DSS).

It is not anymore to be argued that data is everywhere at a time where ‘big data’ sounds as a buzz word in any business meeting. However, turning data into real business insights able to improve business knowledge and performance remains a key challenge. As guest editors, we are proud to present here high quality research papers addressing different steps of the analytics in decision support.

The two first papers deal with the data pretreatment: the extraction process and the data normalisation. The first paper, by Orlando Belo, Vasco Santos, Bruno Oliveira, Claudia Gomes and Ricardo Marques presents RAID-B2K, a tool-supported methodology to transform BPMN conceptual schemas into Kettle execution primitives. In the second paper, Nazanin Vafaei, Rita A. Ribeiro and Luis M. Camarinha-Matos study data normalisation techniques in decision making and they present a case study with the TOPSIS method. Then, the third paper deepens the decision process as Rami A. Kinsara, D. Marc Kilgour and Keith W. Hipel discuss communication features in a DSS focusing on conflict resolution. The last two papers address case studies. Francesca di Donato and Luciano Nieddu present a new non-parametric classifier to predict small-business failures in Italy via performance ratios, and Partha Priya Datta studies decision parameters affecting last mile delivery performance in Indian e-commerce companies.

We are pleased to have included in the *IJIDS* special issue a selection of highly interesting pieces of research. Editing this special issue was for us a great pleasure. We hope that you also enjoy as much reading it and that you can eventually refer to its contents for further research projects.