

## From the Editor: Transition

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*Group Decision and Negotiation* is unique; we publish papers from many disciplines that deal with every aspect of group and negotiated decisions. The Journal is both eclectic and focused; it transcends well-established disciplines and at the same time maintains its roots in organization science, economics, social sciences, applied mathematics, and computer science. *Group Decision and Negotiation* provides a venue for scholars from every field of study: practitioners involved in giving expertise to governments and corporations, scientists studying human and organizational behavior, and engineers developing and deploying systems.

I feel honored and privileged to have been selected by the Journal's Editorial Board and its Nominating Committee and approved by Springer Nature as the editor-in-chief of this esteemed publication.

In this editorial, I would like to briefly reflect on the Journal's beginnings and outline the key goals I have in mind for the coming years. First, however, I wish to acknowledge and thank Melvin F. Shakun, who established the Journal, made significant improvements to it and built an excellent editorial team. His work and that of his team has resulted in a steady increase in the number and the quality of submissions we receive. The journal owes Mel a debt of gratitude.

### Roots

One of the attractions of the IFORS 1990 Conference in Athens was a boat trip around several islands in the Aegean Sea. The trip took several hours and it was during this

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trip when Mel's idea to establish a new journal crystalized and he began discussing it with his colleagues. He approached Tung Bui, Keith Hipel, Marc Kilgour, Katia Sycara, myself and several others, who during the conference made presentations on the topic of group decisions and negotiations. Mel, who had organized sessions on these topics at various conferences, observed that the number of papers and the caliber of the presenters had reached a point at which a journal dedicated to this research could be viable. He asked us if we were interested in joining him in establishing such a journal. We all agreed and shared his enthusiasm. Starting from scratch, in less than two years the first issue of the Journal was published in April 1992.

## Overview

The 1992 volume had almost 300 pages grouped into three issues. Over the years the number of pages in the volumes grew to over 1200 grouped in six issues.

Since the very beginning, *Group Decision and Negotiation* was affiliated with the INFORMS GDN Section. Initially, it found its home with Kluwer Academic Publishers, which later merged with Springer-Verlag, and now is known as Springer Nature.

The Journal has been doing well in terms of the quality of the published papers and readership. The Impact Factor increased from 0.897 in 2012 to 1.254 in 2013 and to 2.12 in 2014 and 1.312 in 2015. It is now ranked A on the ABCD Journal Quality List; 8th in the Social Sciences and 41st in the Management categories. In 2015 the acceptance rate was 29% as compared to 35% in 2012. Today, the Journal has over 7000 institutional subscribers.

Mel Shakun, his editorial team and the reviewers laid a strong foundation for us to continue and expand the success and impact of the Journal.

## Editorial Excellence

The Editorial Board is of the highest caliber. Its Members are dedicated to the Journal and work hard at maintaining its quality. It is therefore very important that they continue to be active and interested in the Journal's well-being and growth. To this end, I will work to sustain communication between the Editor from Springer, the Editor-in-Chief, and the Editorial Board.

One of my duties is to communicate with the Members and respond to the Members' questions, requests, and suggestions. During the annual GDN Conferences, we will continue to have a Board meeting and invite the Editor from Springer. In addition, towards the end of the year, I will present a short report to the Board which can then be discussed with a revised version published in the Journal.

Renewal of the Board Members is vital for the Journal's sustainability. Several Members have recently retired and asked to be replaced. Consequently, we have begun the process of inviting top researchers and leading young scholars who will be involved in shaping the Board; suggesting new departments, departmental editors, and associate editors. The Board input in this regard is very important.

## Our Communities

A close and strong relationship with the INFORMS GDN Section is vital for the Journal as well as the Section. Most of the Editorial Board Members are active members of the Section; they are involved in the organization of GDN Conferences and other activities. These yearly conferences are one of the Journal's promotional vehicles. Recently, the Journal has reciprocated and the GDN Conferences are promoted on its pages and on the website.

We need to ensure that the activities of both the Journal and the Section create a virtuous circle; that they strengthen one another in attracting new readers and members, conference attendees and authors, high quality presentations and submissions. To this end, Springer Nature allocated funds for the GDN Springer Best Paper Awards and the GDN Springer Young Researcher Awards; these awards will help to attract excellent scholars.

GDN Section's Members and the Journal Editors as well as conference organizers and participants are also involved in other societies and participate in other relevant meetings. We need to establish and maintain communication with these societies, including Association for Conflict Resolution, IACM, INFORMS Decision Analysis Society and MCDM Section, MCDM Society, AAMAS, EWG-DSS, INGRup network. Editors may seek interesting presentations and invite their authors to submit a paper and propose special issues with papers coming from such conferences as HICS, MCDM, DSS, IJCCI, and IJCAI,

## Quality and Impact

The impact factors, ranks and other indices are widely used by scholars to decide where to publish their work, universities to assess their faculty, and granting agencies to decide on awarding grants. While they are not perfect measures of quality, we have to accept them; the higher the indices for a journal are the more scholars want to publish in this journal to advance their career. This has a positive effect on both the number and the quality of the submissions.

We need to further increase our impact factor and other rankings, building on what our editorial team has achieved over the past few years. One way to do so is to ensure that we receive high quality papers and papers that appeal to a large group of readers. To this end, I encourage Departmental and Associate Editors to actively seek out papers that they think are likely to have high impact as well as to work with the authors to craft these papers into articles for the Journal. We must also seek state-of-the-art reviews and practice papers which are sought after by practitioners and researchers, in particular by young scholars.

The Editors primary concern is the quality of the papers, which review process they coordinate and review themselves. Given that there is only a limited number of pages allocated to the Journal, we also need to be concerned with the papers' length. We should not have a page limit, but the Authors, Reviewers and Editors should take into account that many good papers are written succinctly. Concise writing may help the author to maintain focus and the reviewers to assess the paper. We should

also continue to work on shortening the submit-to-publish cycle and increase the Author-Journal satisfaction index. Beginning with the last 2016 issue, the Journal will acknowledge the reviewers in its November issue. The Coordinating Editors will be asked to nominate outstanding reviewers who will receive a certificate. Submissions that clearly do not fit the Journal's scope will not be sent for review but returned within 10 days. The authors of these papers will be encouraged to use the new Transfer Desk service provided by Springer to help them in resubmitting their manuscript to a more suitable journal. Lastly, the authors will be encouraged to suggest one or more Editors who may coordinate their manuscript review process as well as between two and four potential reviewers.

## Frontiers to Foundations Feedbacks

Some truly remarkable things have occurred over the last 25 years. We can only assume that more will advances in science and technology, and in the way people and organizations work and live, are in store. A journal like ours needs to be at the forefront because it publishes papers that help individuals to interact and make decisions within and between groups, teams, and organizations. Groupware, social media, expert systems, software agents, and negotiations via email or other systems are examples of new forms of interaction among humans and artefacts. We must publish papers that help our readers to better understand the roles and potential of these new forms, processes, and technologies.

Identification and resolution of conflicts among cooperating software agents, human-software interaction in physical and virtual worlds, behavioral economics and behavioral operation research are examples of new research areas. In the early stages these areas may be driven by technological innovations, it is important, however, that the studies at the frontier are linked to well established rigorous methodologies. Behavioral economics and operations research recognize the significance of research methods applied in psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Papers on the adoption of these methods to study interactions between individuals and groups, on the one hand, and mechanisms, systems, and software on the other hand will help scholars to do undertake similar studies and employ these methods in other domains and in practice.

Together with the use of the existing research methods and their modifications, the traditional group decision and negotiation paradigms need to be revisited and their efficacy assessed. In the software and hardware laden world, new paradigms may emerge from the collaboration and negotiation of human and artificial agents. Decisions made by software-only and by human-software groups in online settings often require the traditional group decision and negotiation models be extended.

It is difficult to identify areas in which intelligent entities do not need to interact, work on joint projects, compete and collaborate. The neat division of the research world into neatly identifiable areas of study no longer exists. It has been replaced by inter-disciplinary scholars integrating and augmenting methods from one or more domains to study phenomena in others domains. In group decisions and in negotiations the inter—and cross-disciplinary character of research is not a trend but a fact.

## Organization

The increase in the number of studies undertaken around the world, the new phenomena that researchers are interested in, the use of technologies in research and research in technologies, can be a challenge in creating a clear organizational structure of a journal. Yet we need to have a structure that allows us to orient ourselves, as well as our authors, reviewers, and readers. One solution is to accept overlapping among the departments to reflect the fact that our research and methodologies combine more than one discipline. The current interest of our readers and strength of the Board may be reflected in the following departments:

- *Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science* is separated from the Artificial Intelligence and Management Science Dept. to indicate the rapid growth of the area.
- *Behavior, Modelling and Group Interaction* covers, among others, behavioral economics, behavioral MS/OR, market studies, crowdsourcing, and social technologies.
- *Decision and Management Sciences* is also separated from the AI & MS Dept. in order to reflect the readers' and the authors' interest in GD & N analysis, model construction and validation, and design of procedures and algorithms.
- *Game Theory, Experiment and Social Choice* indicates that both theoretical and applied game theory papers are sought.
- *Social Sciences* includes social-psychological studies, anthropology, cross-cultural studies, and communication.
- *Systems and Tools* covers GDSS and NSS as well as decision and negotiation aids, groupware and electronic meeting systems, boots, etc.

Associate Editors are not assigned to any particular department and it is clear that they can oversee and manage submissions from any field in which they have expertise. In order to help the authors to better understand the areas of interests of the Journal and to help them to suggest potential Coordinating Editors, the Editors' areas of expertise are listed in the Journal website.

## Request

There remain emerging areas of research that we should nurture. There are actions that should be undertaken in the near future and directions that we should consider. I am and will be asking the Board to be vigilant and make suggestions regarding new departments, changes in the existing departments, special issues, and state-of-the-art reviews and position articles. I would like to ask our Authors, Reviewers and Readers to let me know about the emerging areas and new directions in group decision and negotiation that are you are interested in and would like to read about.

## Thank you

At the very beginning, **Mel Shakun** established a team of renowned scholars who gave the Journal its grounding and prestige. These scholars wrote excellent papers,

prepared special issues, and participated in the editorial process. Over the last 25 years they have created a journal of a quality that may be challenging to maintain. Some of the team members have retired or turned to editorial service with other journals. I would like to thank the Department and Associate Editors who stepped down in 2016. Many thanks and appreciation of your contributions to the Journal go to:

**Max Bazerman** (Northwestern University); **Peri Iz** (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services); **Gwendolyn Kolfshoten** (Technical University of Delft); **Pekka Korhonen** (Helsinki School of Economics); **Victor Lesser** (University of Massachusetts at Amherst); **Gregory Northcraft** (University of Illinois); **Andrew B. Whinston** (University of Texas at Austin); **Ronald R. Yager** (Iona College); **Stan Zionts** (State University of New York at Buffalo)

I will do my best to continue to move *Group Decision and Negotiation* forward, to build on the solid foundation that Mel and his team have built. Many of the team members will continue their work with the Journal and I am very grateful to them. I welcome the Associate Editors who recently joined the Board. Our success will depend on all of you, on your willingness to submit your best work to the Journal and on your commitment to serve in the critically important roles as authors, editors, and reviewers.

The current Editorial Board can be found at: Editorial Board (<http://www.springer.com/business+&+management/operations+research/journal/10726/PS2?detailsPage=editorialBoard>).