Editorial

Editors: Steve Clarke and Brian Lehaney

This editorial was prompted by a recent paper by Paul (2005) and it draws heavily upon that. We present here the objectives of OR Insight and try to interpret those and offer suggestions that might help prospective authors. Some experiences concerning the range of submissions the Journal receives are presented, and we offer insights as to the kinds of papers that we would like to publish and those we would not.

In our first editorial we made the following statement: 'We see little point in changing the aim of OR Insight in the immediate future, but we welcome suggestions. Just to remind readers, OR Insight aims to provide an interesting and stimulating publication which appeals not only to management science practitioners, but also to managers wishing to learn more about operational research (OR). Our interpretation of this aim is fairly broad, and we have revamped the nominated subject areas and the associate editor team to reflect the modern face of OR as we see it.'

Notice that more specifically, OR Insight seeks to:

- stimulate interest in OR;
- inform managers and management scientists about the scope and potential of OR interventions; and
- inform practitioners about developments in related areas.

Full details are on the inside covers and will not be repeated here, but note that the main criteria for publication of contributions will be:

- relevance and interest to managers and management science practitioners;
- readability.

Thus, unlike journals that seek contributions to

knowledge as a main basis for publication, we seek contributions of interest and readability as a main basis for publication. Our success can be judged in many ways. Since we took over the editorship OR Insight has appeared regularly and with full content. The range of articles and the range of contributors are extensive, but previous editorials have covered this topic and we will not repeat the information here.

The process of obtaining, reviewing, and publishing papers, varies enormously. We are heavily reliant on our Associate Editors and on their judgements about papers. After revisions we accept most papers that come to us. We accept a few outright. We reject a few outright. The following is designed to help authors become part of the outright acceptance group and to deter authors from sending papers that would end up in the outright rejection pile.

The reviewers cannot rewrite a paper in a good English and nor can they be expected to do that. Occasionally we receive papers that are essentially no more than drafts. These may have some wonderful content but the way they are written makes them unintelligible and they are likely to be rejected outright. Our advice is to make it easy for the editors and the reviewers. There is an anecdotal view amongst some people that the more impenetrable a paper is the more likely it is to be published by a high quality journal. We could not possibly comment upon that, but we can state very clearly that impenetrable papers will not be published in OR Insight. Nor will papers that comprise incomprehensible jargon.

We receive some papers that some readers may not consider to be OR. We are less concerned

about this than by other aspects. Our view is that OR is a broad discipline, and readers will find that OR Insight reflects the variety of the Annual Conference closely. We are not interested in papers that:

- are about technical aspects of OR that would be meaningless to practitioners,
- take an approach based on ‘never mind the practice, does it work in theory?’
- deal with highly technical aspects of computing with no relevance to practice,
- are purely business-based and have no relevance to OR,
- have been targeted at other journals and are sent to us as a last resort,
- are trying to promote vendor applications.

We are proud of ORI and proud of its distinctive nature. The category of papers most frequently rejected is that of ‘Failed in target journal, will try ORI’. We have no problem with papers that are rewritten to suit our audience. That may mean citing some previous ORI papers and showing that you have actually read our publication at some point!

We sometimes receive papers that appear to be in the right area but after careful reading they actually tell us nothing. Very often papers try to hit too many targets. One of the most common revisions we ask for is to focus the paper on the applied aspect and make clear what happened, what were the successes and failures, and what others may learn from these. Sometimes we receive highly mathematical papers with lots of Greek letters. Routinely we ask authors to remove the bulk of this and to focus on the interest and readability in regard to practical outcomes. We also receive papers that are really sales pitches (usually for software). We are not a free source of advertising. Some papers comprise extensive literature reviews. Good as they may be, they do not normally belong in ORI. There may be odd exceptions if the relevance to practice can be established. We often receive well-written interesting papers that have conclusions that span no more than five lines. If the paper is worth publishing there must

be more to conclude and it should be as interesting and relevant as the main text.

The review process is fairly straightforward once papers have been sifted. A paper may come via an Associate Editor and the review will be managed by that person, or the paper is passed by an Associate Editor to the Editors. Many papers come direct to the Editors from authors, some come from the ORS office, and some are passed to us from editors of other journals. Papers that come to the editors are read by them, and if not rejected outright will either be returned with comments regarding reworking completely or they will be sent to one of the Associate Editors for review. Occasionally we ask other people to review papers if they are in specialist areas. After review, we would expect some changes to be made, and subject to the revised paper being approved, we would hope to publish within the next three issues. Please note that we are a quarterly publication, so turnaround can seem a bit long in some cases, but it is relatively short in terms of the number of issues you might have to wait before seeing your paper published. Out of interest, our reviewers are anonymous but the papers are not. We see no real advantage in anonymity and see the review process as more of a partnership than might be the case with other journals.

To summarise, please send us lots of good quality papers. These should meet the aims of ORI, be written for ORI, and should be interesting, readable, and relevant to practice. We look forward to receiving your contributions.

Paul, RJ (2005) Editor’s View: an opportunity for editors of IS journals to relate their experiences and offer advice. The Editorial View of Ray J Paul. *EJIS* 14(3) 207-212.