Editorial

Steve Clarke and Brian Lehaney
Editors

This issue of OR Insight is, thanks to our contributors, an excellent example of the range of topics falling within the domain of Operational Research.

The first paper, by Bill and Kathryn Dowsland, continues the series of contributions from our Associate Editors, this time for Combinatorial Optimisation. Bill and Kath have done us proud with an excellent summary of the developments in combinatorial optimisation over the last thirty years, followed by a look at some of the issues pertinent to those facing CO problems today. The paper is of interest to specialists and a lay audience, and closes with a plea for others within the domain to enter into the debate through the pages of OR Insight – a plea which we most certainly echo and encourage.

Jennifer Jackson's paper is, by contrast, firmly located in the domain of Soft OR. The subject of the paper is consultation, but focusing particularly on the value and effectiveness of consultation both from the perspective of the policy-maker and those who are 'consulted'. The core of this is a project conducted by the Community Operational Research Unit (CORU) at Lincoln University, which reviewed the effectiveness of consultation between Access/disability groups and the public sector at a local and national level. Beginning from a local level, the study led to local and national surveys and finally to presentation of the findings to the All Party Disability Group (APDG) at Westminster.

Finally, Noelia Oses and Jim Freeman then offer a paper on the use of OR in the gaming industry. Clearly slot machines are no longer penny-in-the-slot, one-armed-bandit spinning reel games. Nowadays the variety of games, and options within games, presents a huge range of alternatives, each with their own distinctive probabilistic characteristics. The paper shows how OR offers a range of solutions that can help raise the performance of the games and those who play them.

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue, which we feel offers a little of something for everyone.