"Choosing discrete simulation software"

We read Mike Pidd's article, "**Choosing discrete simulation software**" in *OR Insight* Vol. 2, No. 3 with interest, and thought that most of his advice was sound. But we did feel that his coverage of our simulation system, HOCUS, was a bit off the mark. HOCUS (hand or computer universal simulator) is *not* a generic model. As its mnemonic suggests, it is a complete system for discrete simulation modelling. Of the categories Mike listed, we would prefer to see it classified as a simulation language. But that is really too restrictive: what is needed is a fourth category — simulation methodologies.

The HOCUS methodology is a general one, for discrete simulation in *any* problem area. Recently, I have used HOCUS to model DNA fingerprinting, a building society department handling the incoming credits rejected by its computer, a proposed FMS system to manufacture 600,000 telephones a year, and a sterile pharmaceutical manufacturing department. Colleagues have modelled building society branches, AGV systems in printing works, automated warehouses, and a wide variety of other applications. The only generic property these have in common is that HOCUS's activity cycle diagram approach can easily be used for them.

In the light of Mike Pidd's warning about salesmen's keenness to sell generic models for any problem, it was unfair of him to class HOCUS as generic. In the case of HOCUS, their keenness is more than justified.

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