

■ SCOTT M. SHAFER, Feature Editor, Babcock Graduate School of Management, Wake Forest University

# Imagine

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*Imagine there's no heaven, It's easy if you try,  
No hell below us, Above us only sky...*

"Imagine," by John Lennon

As we face the dawn of the next millenium, it is natural to begin imagining the changes that are in store for us as a society. Therefore, in this installment of the "Membership Roundtable" I would like to share with you some of the changes I imagine are in store for DSI.

Let's begin our journey into the future on a less controversial issue and save the more interesting ones for later. It is commonly said that the World Wide Web changes everything. I imagine a vast membership website that among other things will allow members to renew their memberships and register for conferences online. I imagine the website will provide an up-to-date directory of members that is searchable on a variety of criteria and will provide links to members' professional web pages and their email addresses. I imagine that the website will provide an interactive conference scheduler that is searchable by author, track, topic, theme, and keywords. The interactive feature will allow members to develop and printout a customized conference schedule including sessions they plan on attending, sessions they are chairing or serving as a discussant of, sessions they are making a presentation in, and the committee meetings they are scheduled to attend.

Finally, I imagine that the website will contain an enormous number of links to information relevant to the teaching and research interests of the membership. Indeed, I don't think it's too farfetched to suggest that the individuals who oversee the maintenance of the content in a specific subject area attaining the status of journal editor.

I imagine in the not too distant future that all submissions to the society's flagship journal *Decision Sciences* will be done electronically. Having been submitted elec-

tronically, it is not much of a stretch to imagine that the papers will be forwarded to reviewers electronically and that reviews will be submitted electronically. What is much less clear is the format of the journal. I imagine that at some point an electronic version of the journal will replace the current hardcopy format. Perhaps initially the journal will be distributed on CDs or DVDs. Eventually, I imagine the journal will be published on the web (perhaps in PDF or similar format). In either case, imagine the possibilities of an electronic journal that capitalizes on the capabilities offered by multimedia such as hypertext links and video clips. Furthermore, a journal published electronically offers the opportunity to search the database of articles and provide direct links to them on course syllabi.

I imagine that conferences will still be an important part of the society. I doubt that any technology in the foreseeable future will come along that provides a good substitute to the old fashioned conference for networking with colleagues. I do imagine a day when the conference proceedings will be distributed electronically and contain video clips of key conference events such as the awards banquet, the plenary session, and key presentations made at the conference.

As I stated in my inaugural column, one of my goals was to use this column to establish a dialogue among members on important membership issues. I also mentioned that I plan on using a website in conjunction with the column so that you will be able to provide input on specific topics. Now I ask for your input. Please visit my website at

[www.mba.wfu.edu/faculty/shafer/dsi/survey.htm](http://www.mba.wfu.edu/faculty/shafer/dsi/survey.htm)

and share your reaction to this column. I will summarize the comments I receive in my next column. To quote John Lennon again, "You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one, I hope some day you'll join us." ■



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