

DSI-Athens International Conference Ends in Success

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ALL PROGRAM CHAIRS FEEL gratitude, pride, relief, and “vindication” when a two-year long intensive conference preparation concludes successfully. There are many components of success—general and personal—depending on the objectives. A conference participant will long remember fondly a meeting with great socials, good networking, and interesting papers. The sponsoring society may measure success by the records set by the meeting and its finances. In addition to all of the above, I fell deeply touched by the many verbal and written favorable comments received.

In spite of many last minute cancellations and no-shows in the shadow of the Kosovo events, over 1,000 people registered. Even more important than the remarkable record attendance, DSI-Athens broke another barrier. As far as I know, it is the first conference in DSI’s 30-year history of annual meetings that the majority of participants (62%) were non-DSI members. In addition, 57% of attendees were non-U.S. based, representing 56 other countries, making this a truly international, ground-breaking conference. Hopefully, the favorable experiences gained from the Athens meeting will prompt many of these nonmembers of DSI to join the Institute and the Institute to implement ways to capitalize on this success. Wouldn’t it be great to see such diversity in the Institute membership and among *Decision Sciences* journal authors? Both are necessary for sustained growth. Our journal editor, Ram Narasimhan, sent a clear invitation for quality submissions and promised fast review to many nonmembers during the panel presentation of four journal editors.

Social events were an early focus of this conference. In the registration fee of \$240 (early for DSI members), we managed to include all four lunches at the Inter-Continental Hotel, along with a get-together party (Saturday) and two dinners (first and last evening). The highlight of the meeting was the opening ceremony and reception

at the Dora Stratou Theater, filled to its 1000-seat capacity exclusively by our delegates, on the evening of July 4. The delicious Greek hors d’oeuvres were followed by an one-hour-long Greek folk dance performance by a world-famous dancing group, wearing various folkloric costumes. The farewell dinner with local music players took place at the picturesque yacht harbor of Microlimano near Piraeus. Mark Davis just told me that his colleagues have a hard time believing him that 800 bused people enjoyed dinner at nine sea-front restaurants. The hotel ballroom was filled almost to capacity at Monday’s lunch when Pier Carlo Falotti (Executive VP for Oracle Europe, Middle East and Africa) delivered his visionary keynote presentation, “The Impact of Internet on the Business Society and Individuals.” Also well attended was Nicos Christodoulakis’ (Greek Deputy Minister of Finance and Professor at Athens University of Economics and Business) Tuesday luncheon presentation on the Greek economy. This was nicely preceded by Monday’s Plenary “Perspectives of Decision Support in Governmental Economic Decisions” by Attila Chikan, Hungarian Minister of Economic Affairs and Professor at Budapest University of Economic Sciences. The general manager of IBM Global Services and his European VPs made a world-class panel presentation on Contract Negotiations for Global IT Outsourcing. Those interested in other presentations or in contacting authors may visit the conference web site

[http://](http://www.dsi99.athens.aueb.gr)

www.dsi99.athens.aueb.gr

or directly the program site

[http://www.fiu.edu/](http://www.fiu.edu/~dsi_athens/cmsindx.htm)

[~dsi_athens/cmsindx.htm](http://www.fiu.edu/~dsi_athens/cmsindx.htm).

The conference services included e-mail, computer, printer and fax support provided by the host institution. Besides

the registration desk staff, several student assistants (dressed uniformly for easy identification) oversaw the 16 meeting rooms to resolve any problems. Morning sessions were well attended, while those in the afternoon felt the impact of Athens temptations and the many daily tours offered (apparently people having a good time, too). Or were they tired of carrying around the 2,097-page proceedings? A CD-ROM might have been better.

Space does not allow me to thank here the numerous individuals that made so many contributions to the preparation and successful delivery of this meeting. I tried to do so in the program chair’s message, presentation, and letters. Thanks to this meeting, I also discovered my ancestor “colleagues,” whose many contributions to decision making were amplified in a panel presentation that ran one hour overtime.

It is interesting to examine some summary data from the DSI-Athens final printed program. Table 1 shows the number of authors ordered by country. The host country (Greece) ranks second, while



From the Opening Ceremony at the Dora Stratou Folk Dance Theater: Steve Zanakis, Georgios Doukidis, Attila Chikan, and Prof. P. Georgiadis (Secretary General for IS, Greek Ministry of Economics).

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Australia's fourth place demonstrates the positive influence of the prior international DSI conference at Sydney. A look at Table 2 indicates final program size by some disciplines. Noticeable is the second place of MCDM and the good place of the "not-quantitative focus area" (Policy/Strategy, Organizational Behavior, Human Resource Management and International Business). Finally, Table 3 reaffirms the popularity of Production Management, MIS and Education tracks in our conferences, along with some new "champions." MCDM (without MO) is the second most populous track, while DEA ranks fifth—suggesting that such separate tracks should be included in future DSI meetings. Future conference organizers may find some of these results helpful in planning their program and promotion efforts. ■



The keynote speaker, Pier Carlo Falotti, Executive VP for Oracle Europe, Middle East and Africa, between the conference co-chairs.

Authors	Country	Rank	Authors	Country	Rank
561	USA	1	7	Singapore	30
132	Greece	2	7	Slovenia	31
74	UK	3	7	Romania	32
50	Australia	4	6	Luxembourg	33
37	Canada	5	6	Russia	34
32	France	6	5	India	35
31	Korea	7	4	Cyprus	36
30	Taiwan - ROC	8	4	Thailand	37
26	Spain	9	4	Japan	38
20	Italy	10	4	Lithuania	39
19	Netherlands	11	3	Peru	40
19	China	12	3	Ukraine	41
19	Hong Kong	13	3	Austria	42
16	Germany	14	3	Saudi Arabia	43
15	Yugoslavia	15	3	Norway	44
14	New Zealand	16	2	Sultanate of Oman	45
13	Belgium	17	2	Latvia	46
12	Finland	18	2	Czech Republic	47
11	Mexico	19	2	Iran	48
11	Brazil	20	2	Egypt	49
11	Chile	21	2	FYRO - Macedonia	50
10	South Africa	22	2	Ireland	51
9	Poland	23	2	Hungary	52
9	Sweden	24	1	Morocco	53
8	Algeria	25	1	Jamaica	54
8	Israel	26	1	UAE	55
8	Denmark	27	1	Belarus	56
8	Portugal	28	1	Cuba	57
8	Switzerland	29			
Total Number of Authors			1,311		

Table 1: Number of authors ordered by country.

Discipline / Tracks	Papers	Panels	Workshops	Tutorials	Total	Sessions
MI+IC+EC+ES Management Information Systems	97	1	2	1	101	28
MC+MO+GD Multi-criteria Decision Analysis, Aid & Practice	95	1			96	24
PM+OM+LS Production Management & Manufacturing Strategy	91	2	1		94	25
PL+HR+IB+OB Strategy & Policy Management	67	2			69	18
ED+AA+MB+FD Education Innovations & Distance Learning	36	8	7		51	25
MS+TR+MR Management Science & Operations Research	48	1			49	13
ST+FO+RM Statistics Theory and Applications	33	1			34	9
Total	467	16	10	1	494	142

Note: Some tracks, like DS/ES, were not included as they can be claimed by more than one discipline.

Table 2: Panels, workshops and tutorials by discipline.

Track	Papers	Panels	Workshops	Tutorials	Plenary	Total	Sessions	
PM	Production Management & Manufacturing Strategy	48	1			49	13	
MC	Multi-criteria Decision Analysis, Aid & Practice	42	1			43	12	
MI	Management Information Systems	39	1	1		41	12	
ED	Education Innovations & Distance Learning	33	3	3		39	15	
DE	Data Envelopment Analysis	32	1	1		34	11	
DS	Decision Support Systems	28				28	6	
QP	Quality & Productivity Improvement	28				28	6	
MS	Management Science & Operations Research	27	1			28	7	
LS	Logistics & Supply Chain Management	27				27	6	
MO	Multi-objective Optimization & Decision Making	27				27	6	
FB	Finance and Banking	27				27	7	
GD	Group Decisions & Negotiations	26				26	6	
IC	Internet Communications, Info Tech & Multimedia	22				22	5	
PL	Strategy & Policy Management	21				21	5	
ES	Expert Systems & Neural Networks	21				21	6	
EI	Environmental & Systems Reuse Issues	20		1		21	8	
IB	International Business	18	2			20	6	
II	Interdisciplinary Issues	14	1	5		20	10	
MK	Marketing	17	1	1		19	6	
HC	Health Care Planning & Hospital Operations	16	1		1	18	6	
OM	Operations Management in Services	16	1	1		18	6	
ST	Statistics Theory and Applications	17	1			18	5	
EC	Electronic Commerce	15		1	1	17	5	
OB	Organizational Behavior & Theory	15				15	4	
CS	Case Studies	12	1	2		15	6	
PE	Process Reengineering and Outsourcing	13	1			14	3	
HR	Human Resource Management	13				13	3	
PA	Public & Government Affairs	13				13	3	
FO	Forecasting	12				12	3	
TR	Transportation	12				12	3	
RW	Real Applications of DSc in Africa & Middle-East	12				12	3	
AC	Accounting	11				11	3	
EF	Entrepreneurship, Family Business & Venture Capital	10				10	3	
MR	Maritime Applications	9				9	3	
SR	Systems, Control & Robotics	9				9	3	
HT	Hospitality & Tourism Management	8				8	2	
MB	MBA Programs in Transition	3	5			8	6	
TE	Transition Economies, European Challenges	6	1			7	3	
PF	Practitioners' Forum	3	2	1		6	4	
SI	Managing Statistical Information Systems	4				4	1	
TA	Transition Economies, Asian Developments	3		1		4	2	
RM	Reliability, Maintainability & Product Assurance	4				4	1	
AA	Academic Administration			2		2	2	
FD	Faculty Professional Development Consortium			2		2	2	
AB	Accreditation of Business Programs		2			2	2	
SP	Special Session		1			1	1	
PS	Plenary Session				1	1	1	
Total		753	28	22	2	1	806	242

Table 3: Panels, workshops and tutorials ordered by track total.



The head table at the awards luncheon at the DSI International Meeting in Athens: Bob Markland, Lee Krajewski, Carol Latta, Joyce Elam, Steve Zanakis, Georgios Doukidis, Takis Miliotis, Dimitris Despotis, and Kostas Zopounidis. For information on the highly successful Athens meeting, see pages 24-26.