

■ Barbara B. Flynn, Babcock Graduate School of Management, Wake Forest University

We have a variety of interesting articles in this issue of *Decision Line*, everything from a new way to do research, to frequently asked questions by doctoral students, to a memorial for a friend.

We start with a discussion of using the Web as a mechanism for conducting survey research. Thomas Goldby of Ohio State University, and Katrina Savitskie, Ted Stank and Shawnee Vickery, of Michigan State University, discuss the benefits and potential problems of web-based surveys for academic research in the Research Issues feature. Along with the benefits of speed, convenience, data entry and novelty, researchers must weigh the potential problems associated with the additional costs, protection against security violation, and biased sampling that may result. They provide interesting and useful examples from their own experience. As Web-based survey instruments become more popular, their article provides a list of important issues to think about.

In the Classroom feature, Rick Hesse of Pepperdine University provides a discussion of the use of Excel for transportation models. Although the procedure is readily available, he focuses on how to move from the standard report to one that would be more useful to managers, rather than mathematicians. He proposes two solutions, one with semi-automatic listing of shipments and one which graphs results.

The Doctoral Student Issues presents a column that should be of great interest to both doctoral students and their advisors — a doctoral student FAQ from Daniel Robey of Georgia State University. His discussion is timeless (I remember having many of the same questions) and valuable, providing sound advice on everything from choosing an advisor and dissertation topic, to obligations to the dissertation chair, order of authorship, and joint versus solo authorship.

The area of e-commerce often provokes more questions than it answers. In the e-Commerce feature, Fay Cobb Payton of North Carolina State University writes about privacy issues related to e-commerce. She moves beyond concerns of se-

curity of data that is entered in an e-commerce site to discuss three issues: personalization, where the users' web experience is tailored to their preferences; e-marketing technologies that allow more targeted marketing programs based on likely customer interests; and analytics, which use touch points to warehouse data for trend analysis to facilitate web traffic and market segmentation. She concludes that former definitions of privacy no longer apply in the B2C domain, and the new definitions are still emerging.

In the Specialist with a Universal Mind, Andy Vazsonyi of the University of San Francisco presents a touching memorial to his lifelong friend, Herb Simon, founder of the artificial sciences. He describes their acquaintance and provides a layman's overview of Simon's theories, describing how influential they have been across many disciplines of the decision sciences.

Andy Ruppel of the University of Virginia discusses thinking and innovation as we enter the 21st century in *From the Bookshelf*. He discusses five books, including *Inventing the 20th Century*, describing 100 inventions that shaped the world during the 20th century; *The Ingenuity Gap*, which describes society's collective inability to see the problems ahead that will emerge from forces already in place; *The Pleasure of Finding Things Out*, which focuses on clear thinking and hard problems solving; *When Genius Failed*, which describes the Long Term Capital Management debacle, drawing parallels with Greek tragedy; and *Archimedes' Bathtub*, which focuses on how to improve problem solving ability.

We close with the Membership Roundtable. Jack Meredith of Wake Forest University challenges DSI members to think about the concept of decision sciences and its role amidst an ever larger number of single-discipline academic organizations. He also discusses the institute's need to find a unique identity and to continue developing innovative programs and features that set DSI apart as an organization and provide needed services to our members. ■



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