SOCIETY OF DECISION PROFESSIONALS
Clarity & Insight for Decisive Action

SDP

NEWSLETTER

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President's Message
By Leslie Lippard and Eyas Radaad

The SDP's annual calendar generally has a familiar cadence: We assemble the team, set priorities, start a new initiative or two and continue working on those that we started in prior years. We plan DAAG in parallel and launch registration somewhere around Thanksgiving so that early birds can register before the end of the year. As DAAG gets closer, it absorbs more of our attention until it occurs, and then once it is over we have a few short months to wrap up the year and roll out the red carpet for the incoming BOD and executive team.

This year has felt like it has been especially compressed given that DAAG 2021 happened later than usual due to the pandemic, but 2021 returned to the usual April timeframe. Rather than our usual 12 month planning cycle we only had 10 months between DAAGs. So with that in mind, I'd first like to thank all of the people who contributed to both of the DAAGs. Recall that 2020 was our first virtual DAAG, and was originally planned as an in-person event. But, when COVID hit, we pivoted to an online event. Then as the pandemic worsened, and the feedback on the virtual format was generally positive, we decided to move ahead virtually for 2021 as well.

So, as you might imagine, thinking about DAAG has been a major focus of this year's leadership team, spanning everything from making decisions about what format, executing on those decisions, and anxiously awaiting the outcome, both in terms of member satisfaction and financial success.

This has given us an opportunity to leverage DA more fully in our everyday operations, to help us navigate the additional risk that the pandemic brought. I have enjoyed this process and I think all of us who have been involved have learned a bit from each other. We have shared tools, learned to listen to each other's perspectives, wrestled with how to facilitate meetings with a lot of opinionated people who all want to speak at the same time, and largely been able to come to consensus, due to our shared commitment to DA.

In this issue

***President's Message**, continued from page 1*

commitment to DA.

The good news is that while some of our initiatives have been delayed by the pandemic (e.g. anything that was relying on face to face contact to progress) but in the main, our community had remained engaged with each other and even grown in directions that we did not anticipate. Thanks to the virtual nature of DAAG, the number of international participants was much higher than in past years, with people attending from 12 different countries. We have continued our efforts to find common ground with data science professionals and have continued discussions with the DAS about the common ground we share with academics and how the two societies can work together for the mutual benefit of both our academic and our practitioner members. We have continued to refine our thinking about growth and engaged with members and sponsors to identify several new ideas that will help us grow.

The bottom line is that as the pandemic begins to abate, we find ourselves very well positioned for the future. I cannot believe how quickly the year has flown by, and I often find myself thinking "wait, don't I have time for just one more initiative?" But, as the July transition date approaches, and there is less and less time, I hold onto the fact that our leadership team this year has thought carefully about what we have chosen to focus on. There are many tasks left to do, but the ones we tackled were the ones we thought were the highest priority given our current state. I am reminded of Ron Howard's assertion that DA allows you to live your life without regrets, because you know you have done the best you can.

This leaves me very excited for what Eyas and his team will bring. There are many exciting ideas on the horizon, and I am confident that his team will leverage DA to navigate through and focus on the ones that will be best for SDP in the next year. I'm excited about continuing to support our transition and seeing some of our longer-term initiatives bear fruit. I'm excited about in-person events, which I believe will be possible in the very near future. I'm excited about many of the new people who have stepped into leadership and who I think will leave their mark on the SDP in a very positive way.

I'm grateful for having had the opportunity to serve as President. It has been a year of learning and growth and I'm especially grateful for the great team that I've had the opportunity to work with and I'm grateful to the membership for placing your faith in us. Thank you all, and please stay tuned-- I think you will like what's to come.

Congratulations to our New SDP Lead Practitioner
Geurt Deinum

Geurt is a Petroleum Engineer with 24 years of experience in the oil and gas business, mainly in various subsurface technical and integration roles. He first became excited about DQ seven years ago and since then has always looked for opportunities to apply it to his own work, to help others with DQ and framing of both complex and simple projects, or to teach about it. He has been very fortunate to have worked and lived with his family in the United States, Oman, Malaysia, China, Kuwait and The Netherlands. In the coming years, Geurt will particularly be interested in helping others with decision making related to energy transition topics.

Upcoming Events

Webinar: Understanding, predicting and preventing bias through cognitive & individual difference psychology   **30-Jun 8:00**

Event	Date	Time Pacific
Houston Chapter Meeting	24-Jun	9:30
Joint Seattle / Vancouver Chapter meeting	24-Jun	5:30
Chapter Out Reach	25-Jun	7:00
Scenario Planning IG	1-Jul	10:00
Certification Council	2-Jul	8:30
Pharma IG	13-Jul	10:00
Board Meeting	16-Jul	7:00
Knowledge Sharing Council	4-Aug	4:00
Scenario Planning IG	5-Aug	10:00
Certification Council	6-Aug	8:30
Pharma IG	19-Aug	10:00
Board Meeting	20-Aug	7:00
Certification Council	3-Sep	8:30
Board Meeting	17-Sep	7:00
Certification Council	1-Oct	8:30
Knowledge Sharing Council	6-Oct	4:00
Board Meeting	15-Oct	7:00
Pharma IG	21-Oct	10:00

Useful Links

The SDP Board has posted the Society's Bylaws and Policy and Procedure Manual, which can be found at: http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/about/governance

A listing of courses in decision analysis available to SDP members is at:
http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/courses/training-program

New Members since March 1, 2021

John Mark Agosta goes by 'John-Mark,' living as he has for the past 40-odd years near Stanford, CA, where he got his degree from EES (now MS&E). Since then he has worked in tech, currently at Microsoft, in Data Science. Find him on medium.com!

Michelle Florendo is a decision engineer and coach for Type-A professionals. With a BS from Stanford and a MBA from UC Berkeley, Michelle draws from decision engineering, design thinking, and lean startup principles to help her clients map their path forward. She also hosts the podcast, Ask A Decision Engineer.

Rui Galvao works at GlaxoSmithKline as Decision Scientist for oncology pipeline. Rui moved from Portugal to the US to perform his PhD at UCSF and postdoctoral studies at the University of Oregon. Currently in New York, Rui worked in biotech finance before joining GSK to pursue his interest in drug development.

Dr James Whitehead, works in Business Management for the Royal United Hospital in the world heritage city of Bath, UK. I am especially interested in data science, agile, decision analysis and decision quality in strengthening decision making in modern healthcare settings, and delighted to be a proud member of SDP.

Chad Novotny is the Lead, Water Resources at Teck Resources in Vancouver, BC. He is a registered Professional Engineer and Project Management Professional. His work focuses on helping Teck's mine sites integrate water stewardship and sustainability into their projects, and helping them facilitate multi-stakeholder multi-objective decision-making processes.

Dr Lawrence Phillips is an Emeritus Professor of Decision Science, at the London School of Economics, and a Director of Facilitations Limited. My expertise is in decision and risk analysis, and teamworking, which I apply in helping clients with issues of strategic and operational management, option evaluation, prioritisation, resource allocation, and crisis management.

Zohar Strinka got her PhD from the University of Michigan studying Supply chain Optimization. She now works at Analytics Strategies in Denver to help companies translate business needs into math and algorithms. She uses a combination of Data Science, Optimization, and other tools to answer these questions.

Bryony Harvey's works at Accenture, and her passion is to create customer delight in realizing the human-centric value that drives sustainable business solutions. She enjoys delivering consulting, advisory & analytical services to support leaders in solving complex business problems, developing strategies & plans in alignment with corporate direction.

Other new members since our last newsletter are: Tanveer Ahmed, Elizabeth Baranes, Rodney Brooks, Andrea Chiappe, Federico Esseiva, Elizabeth Ewing, Kimberly Horndeski, Brendon Keinath, Graham Long, Rob McInnis, Fadi Najdi, Thomas Seyller, Tera Shandro, Ruan Swanepoel, and Christopher Webster

SDP

Chapter News

Calgary Chapter:

The Calgary Chapter held its first Book Club Review in April, starting with "Nudge", by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein. The meeting generated thoughtful conversations on how the Nudge concept applies to Decision Analysis, as well as ethical and practical considerations of Decision Architecture. Our next book club meeting will be scheduled in the Fall and will focus on the book "Calling BullSh*t: The Art of Skepticism in a Data-Driven World", by Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West.

*We held 2 member sessions this quarter. The first was an interactive framing workshop facilitated by Kent Kurkholder from Decision Frameworks answering the question "**How can we expand the community and activity of the SDP Calgary Chapter to create greater value through improved knowledge and awareness of decision quality?".** The second session was presented by Diane Bischak, a University of Calgary Professor, addressing **"Why you have to be careful putting decision trees and simulation together".***

This wraps up our events for this year – activities will resume in the Fall.

Houston Chapter:
The Houston Chapter is approaching the end of its fiscal year and will usher in the next round of officers. Stepping down from President is Ray Spence as Matt Distel will transition from Vice-President to President per the Chapter bylaws. Voting for Vice-President and Secretary will occur on June 18th.

The Chapter is currently filling the calendar with exciting events including an enthralling presentation for June 24th that will be announced to the community soon. Additionally, as more in the Houston area continue to be vaccinated and CDC guidelines ease, the Chapter is planning its first in-person event in July. The Executive Committee will host an open house for those interested in joining the Houston Chapter, meeting the Executive Committee or volunteering their efforts to support the Chapter.

Finally, the Chapter is excited to announce the second iteration of the DQ Energy Summit. The event was a massive success in 2019 but was unfortunately postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19. The event will be in person, and although the date has not been finalized, it is likely to be in late October or early November. The planning committee will update the community as sessions are finalized and speakers confirmed.

San Francisco Chapter:

The Greater San Francisco Bay Area Chapter had its last meeting in March 17 with a robust discussion about Agile and Decision Quality / Decision Analysis. The panelists were Carl Spetzler, Himanshu Jain, Audrey Del Vescovo, Stephen Patch-Putt. The meeting was recorded and is available to SDP member at https://www.decisionprofessionals.com/library/SFChapter-17Mar2021. The panellist represented consulting and business. As you might expect there was some agreement but also some different opinions. The objective was to find the best of both practices and meld them into a better process.

Currently there are no other meetings scheduled. Future meeting are likely to continue to be remote. If you are aware of an interesting speaker or a topic of general interest to our members please contact me. BrianPutt@ThePutts.com.

Seattle Chapter:

The Seattle chapter has held two virtual meetings since the last newsletter. In February, Dr. Steve Tani led a discussion about the foundational 'Rules of Actional Thought' and how they can be applied in practice. Since DAAG 2021 was in April, in our May meeting, Eric Basalik and Steve Glickman provided a trip report and led a discussion with chapter members who were not able to attend the conference.

Vancouver Chapter:

The Vancouver Chapter met remotely in May where members who attended the DAAG conference presented their highlights and reflections on DAAG. In June, we are having a joint meeting with the Seattle chapter. This will be our first joint meeting with another chapter and we are excited to meet with our Seattle colleagues remotely!

Interest Group News

Scenario Planning Interest Group:

The SDP Interest Group Scenario Planning meets every first Thursday of the month, at 10 AM PST. In the last few meetings we have been experimenting with developing scenarios for certain issues from the public domain. For example, we are currently looking at different ways that the working from home trend might continue post-covid, just as a fun exercise. In the future we will aim to tackle similar topics, just to get the hang of what it is like to develop future scenarios. Or we might look at a problem that someone in the group brings from the workplace. However, if there is a presentation of interest to share, then of course we can program that as well.

To join the interest group, just send a mail to henk@navincerta.com.

Council Focus

Membership & Communication Council:

The Membership & Communication Council presented to the Board of Directors on May 21. The discussion focused a bit on membership composition but most of our time was spent discussing the results from our membership survey of last Fall.

There was good discussion around the values members feel they derive from SDP. Educational opportunities such as DAAG and webinars were a favorite while the broadening of certification recognition and the facilitation of a mentorship model were areas many felt would be a benefit enhancement. We also learned that some members feel they could get more out of SDP if they had more time. Feedback like this reminds us that we all have so much going on and only so much time in a day. We continue to strive to provide our members with more timeworthy programs and other benefits.

Special Interest Groups and Chapters were also discussed. Those who participate in them report significant value while many report having insufficient knowledge of them to render an informed opinion.

Lastly, an on-line membership directory has been on the need-to-have list for a new web home page for some time. The pandemic created the need for a more rationed approach to resources given the unpresented rise in uncertainties. As things appear to be moving in the direction of the more familiar, we look forward to re-energizing discussion of this in the new SDP Board year. We look forward to furthering ideas from the survey with the Board and other Councils to come up with a few ideas on how best to take action to continue enhancing member benefits.

Thank you to all who have provided their thoughts and feedback and thank you to my colleagues on the Membership and Communication Council who collaborated on the creation and distribution of the survey; the collection and analysis of the results; and the preparation and delivery of the presentation to the Board. This was a team effort all the way around.

Ask the Fellows

In every issue, we ask our active Fellows to share their experience and wisdom with us, to answer some of the tougher questions.

Question for the Fellows: What sector, industry, or specific set of organizations do you feel is significantly underserved/unserved by DA?

We expected to get answers naming different industries, perhaps niche industries or regions where DA should be used but is underserved for one reason or another. However, what happened was a discussion that took a different direction.

Fellow 1:   The most underserved sector is societal decision making. The Science that should be guiding our decisions and policy making is decision science. Instead, we have political interests and experts making policy that violates the principles of Decision Science and effective governance design.

Fellow 2: As decision professionals we naturally separate the prediction of likely consequences from the preferences for such consequences. I would want experts to contribute to the prediction of likely consequences of different policies, however I would not ask him/her to represent our society's preferences.   incentives and mindset may make some experts poor agents for representing society's preferences.

Fellow 3: The societal process for defining the decision makers is essentially political. The decisions of different political leaders around the country and around the world have been quite varied. Likely, they aimed to reflect what each political leader understood the preference of their constituency to be given the advice they received. The process those decision makers went through to come to their conclusions could be quite a valid target for improvement, although it gets entangled with the political process for selecting them and the power of public opinion at the time.

My hunch is that any decision making process would be selectively mis-used to serve each incumbent's political interests and preferences rather than objectively managed for decision quality. It may be tilting at a windmill.

 Fellow 4: I agree with the above, …. with regard to trying to apply decision science to societal – a.k.a., political – problems. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita has had some impressive success modeling politics and political actors, and one of his key assumptions (included in his models) is that the primary objective of anyone who is in power is to stay in power, regardless of whether the system is a democracy, oligarchy, autocracy, or whatever. Politicians would probably love to apply decision science to achieving that objective, but I'm not sure that would go very far in solving societal problems.

Ask the Fellows

Question for the Fellows: (continued)

 I also hark back to something Eric Johnson pointed out to me years ago: a good decision process is transparent, and oftentimes transparency is the last thing a politician wants.

 Fellow 5: I think the intersection of dynamic or Operations Research type decisions and Decision Quality is worth more thought. Many associate DQ with slowing decision making. What about Fast DQ? Maybe with SDP's efforts to include the big data world of analytics there's an opportunity.

Fellow 6: The high level of uncertainty in the passenger airline market now makes it even more relevant to have a stochastic approach (to pricing). However, the revenue management systems use single point inputs or data trends to drive decisions, with an emphasis on forecast bookings (tickets sold).

We have had some success using DA with airlines for network planning and competitive reaction decisions, but the Airline ticketing system is still pretty old school. They have a much shorter response time to conditions and are evolving toward a use of a pricing continuum (instead of seat categories), but uncertainty is not part of the model.

T*o summarize and overly simplify: The areas that were discussed as underserved with DA/DQ are Pricing, Decision Makers for large societal issues, policy making.*

Thanks to all Fellows including Carl Spetzler, Brian Putt, Patrick Leach, Gary Bush, and Frank Koch

Brain Teaser

March Brain Teaser Answer

As we attempted to provide originality and challenge in our March Brain Teaser, we realize that its degree of difficulty was above previous versions. There were no answers for the March Brain Teaser. We will keep the solution brief. If anyone is interested in working the March BT in more detail, please contact the BT editor for further insights.

Answer: Intuitively since it takes development teams 3 years to develop each product, but production teams are engaged for 6 years to produce each product; twice as many production teams are needed relative to development teams. On the discovery side, through simple math or a mini Monte Carlo model, 12 teams can generate on average 1.50 products a year (6 teams 0.75 prod/yr) on a steady state (SS) basis.

Question 1: The optimum for the 12 teams across the three phases is 6 discovery teams, 2 development teams and 4 production teams on a SS basis. The starting point is 12 discovery teams with a ramp-up promotion strategy towards the above SS as products are discovered and developed. A sunset strategy promotes teams to maximize late year production.

Question 2: At 100 units/yr per production team, a good SS initial estimate is 400 units/yr. In reality due to systems constraints and randomness the average is lower, like 360 units/yr SS. The ramp-up and sunset effects that further lower the 30 year production average to 350 units/yr. The ramp-up strategy plus sunset strategies maximize full life average production to 390 units/yr.

THE JUNE BRAIN TEASER

*Instructions: You can win "bragging rights" by being the first to submit the correct answer of this brain teaser to the newsletter editors (**SDP Newsletter: Brain Teaser**). We will announce the winner in the next issue. Our Brain Teaser Editor is Tony Fernandez.*

The Merciful King

Three prisoners have committed such horrible crimes that they are sentenced to death. The King, who is very merciful, each year pardons a prisoner sentenced to death. Unfortunately, this year there are three. The King asks his top DA to devise a fair method to decide which prisoner should be pardoned. The DA conceives of three white circles and two black circles, one of which will be glued to each prisoner's forehead; the two surplus circles discarded. The prisoners cannot see the circles placed on their own foreheads, however will see the circles on the other two prisoners' foreheads. Whichever prisoner first correctly guesses the color of their own circle, gains the pardon. A failed guess means immediate death. A correct guess by one prisoner means immediate death for the other two prisoners. The prisoners are of fair intelligence and are brought in for the event and explained the rules as the circles are placed on their foreheads, then they are brought face to face with the other prisoners for their fateful guess.

Put yourself in the place of one of the prisoners, who sees the other two prisoners have each a white circle. After about 60 seconds that seem eternal, you fear that if you don't respond you will be beaten to the punch and lose your life.

1.) What is your best guess and why?

2.) Bonus: alternative reasoning to support your guess?   Good luck!