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From the Editor

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From the Editor

BRUCE L. GOLDEN
Editor

Neural networks (computer programs designed to recognize patterns and learn in parallel "like" the human brain) have been studied by scientists and engineers since the work of McCulloch and Pitts in the mid-1940s. During the 1950s and 1960s, many prominent computer scientists did research in this area. After Minsky and Papert pointed out the limitations of early neural network models, however, most of these researchers moved on to pursue other topics during the 1970s and early 1980s. Several key papers in the mid-1980s resulted in the re-emergence and considerable growth of the field.

In general, neural networks have been used to perform prediction, classification, and optimization. Numerous successful applications are described in the literature (for example, see the September 6, 1993 issue of *Fortune*).

In contrast to engineers, operations researchers have been relatively slow to recognize the potential in applying neural networks and to contribute to the field. The *JOC* has published several articles on this topic—the first one in 1989. The primary focus of the current issue is to significantly advance the state of knowledge regarding neural networks, especially within the operations research community. The first five articles form a cluster that conveys much of the excitement and potential of this emerging field. I urge you to look over these articles. In the future, we hope to organize and publish clusters on other important topics in the interface of operations research and computer science.

Finally, again, I would like to thank our first group of Institutional Sponsors. The contributions and support provided by these organizations will allow the *JOC* to expand its efforts in 1994.

