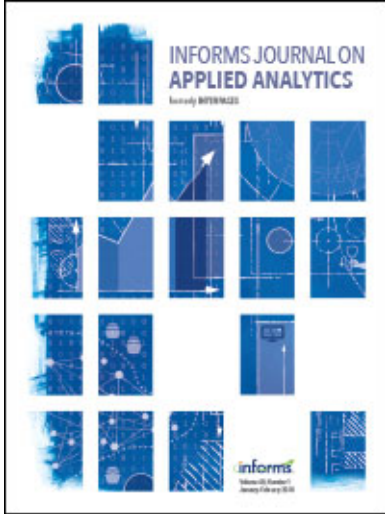




Interfaces

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From the New Editor

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FROM THE NEW EDITOR

With the passing of the flag on April 1, 1982 (an appropriate date somehow), I assumed responsibility as Editor-in-Chief for *Interfaces*. This is a day you may eventually mark in your calendar next to December 7, 1941. However, I am told that the new editor enjoys a short honeymoon; as I thoroughly enjoyed my first honeymoon, I look forward to this second one.

PERSPECTIVE AND PHILOSOPHY

Interfaces has been, and will remain, a journal whose purpose is to increase communication about the practice of MS and OR. Its primary audiences have been managers, MS practitioners, students, and those members of the academic MS/OR community who concern themselves with applications. It has, in some quarters, seen limited respect due to its orientation toward practice, i.e., toward what works in MS/OR.

Such lack of respect is nonsense, as MS/OR is an *applied* discipline. This discipline is scientific to the extent that it is dedicated to self-criticism and self-improvement. An organized determination of what works in MS/OR and what doesn't work is required for the discipline to improve, to learn from its past. That is a prime long-run purpose of *Interfaces* — i.e., to provide the empirical tests of theory, the case studies of successes (and failures) that are required if the field is indeed to be scientific.

In the short run, then, *Interfaces* will provide the practicing manager with information on what works and what doesn't; in the long run, the material printed in *Interfaces* can help provide the body of information needed to guide future developments in the field.

Where in our field are these developments most likely to occur? Several trends suggest the answer. Our meetings are dominated by sessions on application of known techniques to new and timely problems. Corporations that once concentrated MS/OR professionals in a central staff group now have MS/OR personnel dispersed throughout functional areas. Methodological advances in our profession are being made; on a different level, however, some of the most important (and *creative*) contributions are occurring through the application of *existing* methodology in new or innovative ways to management problems.

Interfaces plays a unique role in our profession at a critical time in its history. The MS/OR profession is entering its maturity, and in order to remain vital new frontiers are required. Among those new frontiers are the development of an understanding of implementation success — what works, what doesn't, and why. Such an understanding will at once lead to better practice and will guide the development of new theory. *Interfaces* is dedicated to help produce that body of observations and experience; this editorial board will extract and present readable accounts of such experience in these pages.

EDITORIAL GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals. The audiences, then, for *Interfaces* are managers, MS/OR practitioners, academics, and students. These audiences are international, and the structure and solicitation policy of the journal will continue to reflect this international flavor.

For *Interfaces* to continue to be successful, it must balance certain goals:

- It should be relevant to practitioners first, but to academics as well.
- It should publish articles with substantial content, but which can also be understood by individuals with little technical training.
- It should deal with important and often difficult problems in a way that is attractive to read, i.e., informal, fast paced, without pretension, and possibly even with occasional wit.
- It should, when necessary, be willing to deflate either academics with solutions in search of problems or practitioners deaf or immune to improved solutions to their problems.

Content. Articles should be readable and interesting. Often they will be short. And, to the extent possible, they should treat their topics with wit. However, every article need not be of interest to every reader. A sufficient quota of articles of general interest in the front of each issue will allow for occasional special interest, more narrowly focused (and *perhaps* more technical) articles in the latter part of the issue. The style used in *Science* is a good model here; authors will get the best editorial reaction from short, tightly written pieces.

Several types of articles are encouraged:

- (a) MS/OR applications of tangible *value*, verifiable from the client
- (b) MS/OR applications that are being *used*, but without easily established tangible value. The use should be verified convincingly, and some attempt to infer value should be made. Hard-won lessons of probable interest to practitioners are particularly desirable.
- (c) Opinion papers/philosophical papers. These are encouraged to the extent that (i) they are likely to stimulate discussion and response and (ii) they are written in an interesting and understandable manner.

This does not rule out other categories of articles, but rather recognizes the most likely forms that articles are expected to take.

Given that *Interfaces* aims to bridge the gaps between managers, MS/OR practitioners, academics, and students, I see no reason why an article published in *Interfaces* could not have been published elsewhere before, probably in a more technical form.

For the past several years, *Interfaces* has maintained dual publication standards: refereed and nonrefereed papers, at the author's request. The new policy is to have all articles read by at least one reviewer, in addition to the Editor-in-Chief, but the journal will not formally be a refereed journal.

Style. Strunk and White will be our guide for writing style. A good structure is: problem first, then solution (with implementation details), followed by model, solution algorithm, description of data, etc., as needed in an appendix. Equations should be kept to a minimum and Greek symbols avoided if possible. Special penalties and considerable derision will be meted out to authors who feel obliged to use footnotes.*

*The use of the footnote is primarily reserved for the editor (apologies to JDCL).

In terms of length and structure:

1. The technical content of a paper should be available for the paper to be of value. The form of that technical content can be an appendix or references, so the potential user can use it. Do not eliminate technical detail; rather, limit it to essentials and place as much as possible in appendices.
2. It may take longer to motivate and describe an application than 10 double-spaced typed pages, the general limit. Longer articles will be considered, but they must be very tightly written, and the authors should recognize that as only one or two such articles can be published per issue, publication delays may occur. Such articles will be highlighted as "Features," and will be reviewed more thoroughly than other articles in the issue.

ORGANIZATION

As will be evident on the masthead of the October issue, there will be three classes of members on the editorial board:

- *Functional Editors*, who will solicit and review articles in areas such as production and operations management, decision support systems and implementation, public sector applications, strategy and planning, marketing, and the like
- *Contributing Editors*, who will be responsible for writing or editing regular columns in a defined area
- *Editors-at-Large*, who will provide assistance in a number of special ways, editing special sections, soliciting articles, etc.

All articles should be *submitted directly to me* at the below address. Authors can expect to hear about their papers within several weeks: our policy will continue to be one of rapid turnaround.

MISCELLANY

- We will consider publishing, on an occasional basis, appropriate tutorial articles. Such articles might be derived from introductory chapters of exceptional books, from tutorial sessions at national meetings, etc. Send them in or call with a proposal.
- Special issues, or sections of issues, will be considered to the extent that a special editor and a viable publication plan exists. "MS/OR applications in the _____ industry" or "MS/OR application of _____ methodology" might be appropriate. Again, send in a proposal.
- A Letters-to-the-Editor section will be a regular feature. Let me hear from you (briefly).
- Coming events:
 - Position statements and criteria for publication by the functional editors
 - Reports of the start of a regular readership survey
 - A series of format and style changes (Note: if you have a logo/design you wish to propose for adoption by *Interfaces*, send it in. We'll pick a winner and use it.)

- In order to maintain a high level of interest and controversy, I have asked Gene Woolsey to continue his "Fifth Column."

As a final comment, I feel that *Interfaces* has been a good, successful journal. I hope to expand upon this base of earlier success by:

- Broadening its reach beyond the immediate MS/OR community
- Widening the scope and coverage of the articles
- Consolidating and maintaining close relationships with its primary constituency, the practitioner community.

Send your articles, plans, proposals, or offers of help to me at:

The Pennsylvania State University
310A Business Administration Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-863-2782

Or look for me at one of the national meetings — I'm the editor who carries a purse.

Gary L. Lilien
Editor-in-Chief
Interfaces

FROM THE OLD EDITOR

The exigencies of publishing (known more commonly as lead time) dictate that June and August issues of this journal, already in process, will be put together by us lame ducks out here in Colorado; the "new brooms" will strut their stuff beginning with the October issue. We can wish for them nothing more precious than that they should enjoy *Interfaces* as much as we have.

Gene Woolsey