

FOREWORD

The future plays an important role in this issue of IJCIM, with three out of five articles considering issues of planning and forecasting. By modeling the future, computer technology helps us anticipate needed actions as well as act quickly to changing circumstances.

In the first of these articles Ranjit Bose applies the technology to the planning of commercial web sites through the development of a Decision Support System. Scheduling is another future-oriented business activity and in their article S. Shamala, M.Y. Saman, M.Othman and R. Johari also apply IT techniques to achieve greater efficiency within computer processes themselves. More specifically, the authors examine how to model the complex scheduling issues involved in the packet-switched networks that make up much of our modern communications systems.

The final future-oriented article, by Chin Wen Cheong, Amy Lim Hui Lan, and V. Ramachandran also considers forecasting within computer networks, here specifically web servers. Because of the variability of workloads within servers the authors present an analysis that uses techniques of fuzzy logic to provide appropriate modeling. Computers are extremely precise but many recent advances, such as the last article, exploit the paradoxical ability of computers to better analyze situations which lack precision. Character-recognition and similar tasks must face variability and noise; Mohd Yusoff Mashor and Siti Noraini Sulaiman examine an algorithm that provides superior number recognition under conditions of noise.

The first articles discussed here show the contraction of time through modeling the future. The final article, by Sthaphon Uraisin and Tang Van To, discusses techniques that allow the more efficient contraction of both space and time through highly integrated methods of electronic transactions. With the usual combination of common themes and diversity, this issue of the IJCIM should contain much to interest all members of our readership.

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