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Book Selection

Edited by JOHN M. WILSON

Interactive Decision Making: The Graph Model for Conflict Resolution

LIPING FANG, KEITH W. HIPEL and D. MARC KILGOUR
John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1993. xv + 221 pp. £49.50
ISBN 0 471 59237 4

Decision making theory, in order to make sense, requires that the theory of rational choice is operating in the decision making process. This implies a psychological function that instructs the decision maker to satisfy his/her overall scheme of preferences. Evidence to date indicates that this assumption, in general, is not well supported. However, in very constrained circumstances such as the form of Marxism practised in some countries, it does have evidence to support the theory. Hence, one must always put into perspective the situation in which decision making theory is being invoked. If the system under study is sufficiently open, the use of decision making theory becomes more of a heuristic than a model to be blindly followed. With this in mind, one must read the book under review.

The use of graphics and the accompanying software is very useful in preparing a decision analysis. The software requires about 400 K of RAM to use, if installed on the hard drive, but can produce results directly from the floppy disk drive. The trick is to enter the GMCR directory and then type in the command GMCR2 ⟨ Chicen.dat ⟩ myfile.out. There is a User's Manual in Appendix B. The authors take you through the process rather well.

The book is well organized and offers the busy OR analyst the opportunity of picking and choosing what is required to complete the analysis. On page 31 there is an excellent outline of the book. One should consult this page before going through the book to find what you are looking for. The outline on this page will save a lot of time. In spite of my misgivings about decision theory, this book and the accompanying software are useful. With this in mind I recommend this book to those of us who are called upon to conduct decision support analyses.

CHARLES LEAKE

Software Inspection

TOM GILB and DOROTHY GRAHAM
Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1993. xxiii + 47 pp. £24.95
ISBN 0 201 63181 4

Inspection is a formal and structured process, the object of which is to uncover defects in documents as near to the point at which they were introduced as possible (defect correction). An important aspect of the overall inspection process is the attention given to the improvement of those processes which give rise to the documents being inspected (process improvement leading to defect prevention). The principal benefit from inspection is derived through the inspection of documents as far upstream in the product development process as possible. In the context of software development therefore, the benefits of inspection result not only through the scrutiny of pre-implemented (and therefore pre-tested) code, but also through the close examination of all earlier documents, from proposal, and project plan