

Editorial

It is my great privilege to write my first editorial as editor-in-chief of ORiON. Recently, Prof Fanie Terblance and Mrs Susan Campher have stepped down as the editor-in-chief and the journal manager of this journal. Miss Elzanie Bothma and myself are taking up their mantles and we hope to continue with the exemplary work that they have done with ORiON. We are grateful for Dr Stephan Nel who has agreed to continue to typeset the journal.

The current edition of ORiON contains two papers, starting with a paper titled “Estimating net ideal cycle time for body-in-white production lines” by Grobler, Kotze and Joubert. This paper is concerned with the initial production stage of vehicles. During this step, the production capacity is fixed. The industry standard used in order to estimate the net ideal cycle time, a measure of production capacity, is a basic heuristic reliant on deterministic assumptions on the production process. The paper demonstrates that this approach often leads to lower than planned levels of production. The authors of this paper propose a more general approach by modelling the actual production using a range of distributions and, based on the analysis of observed data, recommend using the Weibull distribution for this purpose. Implementing the newly proposed method leads to greater initial investment, but greatly reduces losses in the long term.

The final paper, by Shuttleworth and van Vuuren, is titled “Vehicle routing decision support for a local retailer”. This paper considers the assignment of delivery vehicles to service customers in the retail sector. The prohibitive cost associated with vehicle routing software as well as the difficulty of integrating the software with existing platforms often result in schedulers assigning routes to vehicles based on past experience. In order to ensure that the benefits associated with the acquisition and integration of the required software outweighs these costs for a large retail distribution centre in the South African Western Cape, cost savings analyses are described in this paper in the form of a case study. In addition to this interesting case study, a detailed overview of the vehicle routing problem is provided.

I would like to thank the authors of the papers for submitting their research to ORiON and the reviewers for their time and effort. I also thank Dr Stephan Nel for his efforts with the typesetting of the journal. A word of appreciation is owed to Prof Fanie Terblanche and Mrs Susan Campher for their assistance with this issue of ORiON. Finally, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the journal manager, Miss Elzanie Bothma, for all of her efforts in order to make this issue possible.

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