



GROUP DECISION AND NEGOTIATION

GDN SECTION OF INFORMS

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Letter from the President



Dear members of the GDN section,
dear colleagues,

an unusual summer has passed and we are heading into an unusual fall and winter season. Apart from Corona, which probably has occupied everybody's attention during the summer, several things have been going on in the GDN section.

First of all, there was the search for the new Editor in Chief of the GDN journal. The search committee, which consisted of the area editors of the journal and the section council, received several interesting nominations and finally decided to nominate the interim editors, GJ de Vreede and Mareike Schoop, as the new Editors in Chief. The choice still has to be confirmed by Springer publishers, but it is very unlikely that they will not accept this nomination. Therefore, I already can congratulate Geert-Jan and Mareike on their new position. They have done an excellent job as interim editors, and I am confident that under their editorship, the journal will continue its successful development.

This year is an election year, not just for the president of the US, but also for informs officers. As stated in our section bylaws, I have established a nomination committee consisting of Colin Eden (Strathclyde University), D. Marc Kilgour (Wilfrid Laurier University) and Masahide Horita (University of Tokyo) to collect nominations for the offices of Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President for membership and publications. The deadline for nominations ended on October 31st. Later this year, you will receive an e-mail from informs about the voting procedure and the transition to the new officers will take place in March 2021.

I would like to use this opportunity to remind you how important membership in the section is for our community. If you receive this newsletter, you are already a member of the section, thank you very much for that. But you might know colleagues, who are interested in our field, who even might attend our conferences, but still are not members of the section yet. Please help us to convince them to join the section. This will strengthen our position within informs and create a stronger community for all of us.

One of the benefits of section membership is a reduced fee for the GDN conference. As you already know, we plan to hold the next conference on June 6-10 2021 in Toronto to make up for the conference we had to cancel earlier this year. We hope that by that time, the situation will be safe enough so that we can hold a conference in its traditional form, which we all missed this year. I am looking forward to seeing you all there.

Stay safe and healthy

Rudolf Vetschera

1. SOCIETY NEWS

1.1. Group Decision and Negotiation Conference (GDN 2021)

Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, June 6 to 10, 2021

The 21st International Conference on Group Decision and Negotiation will take place at Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, as an event organized by the Group Decision and Negotiation (GDN) Section, Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS).



The annual INFORMS GDN conference provides a forum for researchers from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. The Conference is the premier venue for academics, practitioners, teachers, consultants, and graduate students involved in every aspect of group decision and negotiation involving human as well as artificially intelligent agents.

The conference will include several keynote presentations by world-class experts, including a presentation of the 2021 winner of the GDN Section Award, which will be announced at the conference. Numerous presentations and panels will feature internationally renowned researchers. The conference will also support junior researchers by offering a dedicated student track and a doctoral consortium. The GDN Section will provide travel grants for up to two qualified junior researchers.

Selected papers will be published in a volume of the Springer Lecture Notes in Business Information Systems and possibly special issues of the Group Decision and Negotiation Journal and other journals. The submitted papers will be considered for GDN Springer Best Paper Awards (\$600 and \$400) and GDN Springer Young Researcher Awards (\$300 and \$200).

More information about doctoral consortium, paper submission, awards, focused streams, workshops and sessions as well as about deadlines and fees is available on the GDN 2021 website (<http://gdnconference.org/gdn2021>).

Important information about GDN 2021 Format

The GDN Section Council has decided that GDN 2021 will be held in the hybrid format of in-person presentations and virtual presentations by the choice of

presenters, if in-person presentations are permitted by public health regulations at the time of conference. If in-person presentations cannot be held because of public health regulations, the conference will be held virtually in its entirety. In any case, we have decided that GDN 2021 will take place at the scheduled date and the format that is appropriate for the scheduled time (hybrid or virtual) will be selected and announced in advance. Presentation scheduling will take into account time zones of presenters.

Important dates:

1. Deadline for the submission to the Springer Proceedings: **December 15, 2020;**
2. Deadline for the submission to the Local Proceedings: **January 31, 2021.**

We cordially invite you to join GDN 2021,

D. Marc Kilgour, Honorary Chair

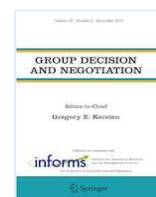
Keith W. Hipel, Adiel de Almeida, and Rudolf Vetschera, General Chairs

Liping Fang, Danielle Morais, and Masahide Horita, Program Chairs

1.2. Announcement: GDN Journal new Editors in Chief

Dear members of the GDN community,

We were as shocked as you to learn of Gregory Kersten's unexpected passing in May 2020. We mourn a dear friend and colleague and the Group Decision & Negotiation journal lost a devoted Editor-in-Chief that served the journal so well for many years.



After serving as Interim Editors-in-Chief, we were honored to be selected as the new joint Editors-in-Chief for the next five year. We are fortunate that Gregory left the journal in great shape. Thus, we are merely following in his footsteps to keep the review cycles as short as possible whilst maintaining high quality feedback that authors have come to expect from GDN.

We have both been actively involved with the journal for many years, as Associate Editors and Departmental Editor. In addition, we organized several special issues for the journal and also published ourselves in the journal. Although we have both been active in the GDN community for many years, we feel we should briefly introduce ourselves.

GJ de Vreede: I am the Associate Dean for Research and Professional Programs and a Professor of Information Systems at the Muma College of Business of the University of South Florida in the US. I have been a visiting professor at the Universities of Arizona and Pretoria. In 2010, it was my honor to host the GDN conference in Delft, my home town and the place of my alma mater, Delft University of Technology. My research focuses on collaboration, group decision-making, crowdsourcing, and facilitation. Together with a number of colleagues I founded the field of Collaboration Engineering and developed the thinkLets pattern language to design repeatable collaboration processes. ThinkLets-based processes have been deployed in many organizations worldwide, the most well-known of which is ING Group who adopted a thinkLets-based Risk & Control Self Assessment process as their company standard.

Mareike Schoop: I am Professor of Information Systems and the Dean of Studies in Information Systems at the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, Germany. I have been a visiting professor at the University of Oxford in 2019 and 2012 and Technical University of Vienna in 2009. Many of you will remember the GDN 2017 conference in Hohenheim castle that I organized. My main research interest is the ICT support of business negotiations, e.g. using data analytics to predict the result of an ongoing negotiation process; providing sophisticated communication support on all semiotic levels integrated with decision support; using gamification to enhance negotiators' motivation. I have developed the negotiation support system Negoisst that has been used in universities worldwide to teach negotiations and to train future negotiators.

In our role as the new Editors-in-Chief, we will focus our efforts on the continuing the upward trend of the journal that was started by founding editor Mel Shakun and continued by Gregory Kersten:

- Continue to build the journal's reputation. In the most recent (2019) Australian Business Dean Council (ABDC) journal list, GDN is ranked as an A journal. Its impact factor is 1.612 and its h-factor is 57. In JOURQUAL, GDN is ranked as a B journal. In Social Sciences it is a top quarter journal, whereas in Decision Sciences, Management of Technology & Innovation, and Strategy & Management it is a second quarter journal (source: scimagojr.com). We plan to strengthen these metrics by actively inviting review papers and research agenda papers, by organizing special issues on current 'hot' topics, and by actively sharing each issue contents on various listservers.
- Strengthen the Editorial Board. As a number of board members have indicated their desire to retire from the board, we plan to find suitable replacements for them. Furthermore, we will strive to optimize the coverage of the journal's various research areas and aim for diversity on the board in terms of global regions, gender, career stage, and ethnicity. Finally, we will organize a regular Board meeting, virtually or at the GDN Conference.

- Decrease the length of the review cycle. Currently, it takes on average 92 days to get a first decision and 391 to reach acceptance. We strive to get these numbers down by actively monitoring paper progress and getting buy-in from editorial board members. We will also explore different ways to recognize high quality and timely reviews.
- Fast-track GDN Conference papers. We are currently working with Springer's team to allow fast-tracking a selection of the best annual GDN Conference papers. Due to copyright issues, this has become a challenge that we wish to address. Many of the thought-leaders in our section send their best work to the conference and we believe the community at large will benefit from seeing expanded versions in the journal.
- Safeguard interdisciplinarity. Group Decision & Negotiation is, by definition, an interdisciplinary area of research and practice. The journal has exemplified this, as evidenced by the breath of published papers. We will safeguard the journal's interdisciplinary nature by welcoming submissions from different disciplines and ensuring that the Editorial Board reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the field.

We are here to help you develop your research for submission to the journal or answer any questions you have concerning your works in progress. We also welcome your submissions of your best work to the Group Decision & Negotiation journal. Finally, we are eager to learn of any suggestions you have for the journal and look forward to working with all of you!

GJ de Vreede & Mareike Schoop

1.3. Group Decision and Negotiation Cluster at INFORMS 2020 Annual Meeting

The INFORMS 2020 Annual Meeting was held virtually for the first time, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



From November 8-13, the inaugural Virtual INFORMS Annual Meeting featured more than 3,500 synchronous and asynchronous presentations from O.R. and analytics professionals across the globe, including live presentations with Q&A opportunities and around the clock access to on-demand sessions. The GDN cluster had four sessions at the INFORMS Annual Meeting:

1. MCGDM: Multicriteria Group Decision Making Models;
2. Negotiation Models and Analysis;
3. Theory and Application for Decision Analysis.

1.4. Work with a core GDN element was given the 2020 'System Dynamics Application Award'

Professor David Lane and Visiting Fellow Elke Husemann won the System Dynamics Applications Award at the virtual 2020 International System Dynamics Conference, Bergen for their work with Darren Holland and Abdul Khaled from the FSA.

The award is presented by the System Dynamics Society and recognises the best 'real world' application of system dynamics, based on demonstrated measurable benefit to an organisation.

Their work modelled both person-to-person and foodborne effects and used empirical data for model calibration and analysis. It has been communicated via a report, presentations at conferences and the paper Understanding Foodborne Transmission Mechanisms for Norovirus: A study for the UK's Food Standards Agency which was published in the European Journal of Operational Research in 2019.

The paper outlines the complete arc of a range of modelling activities initiated by the FSA, which commissioned the research study to improve understanding of foodborne transmission of the virus known as the 'winter vomiting bug', and of where it might target its efforts.

Outcomes of the study included insight into the sources of seasonality of Norovirus, recommendations for future FSA research projects, and an increased understanding by the FSA of where it should concentrate efforts to control outbreaks.

David Lane, Professor of Business Informatics at Henley Business School, said: "Because the FSA is serious about its science, we were able to work with highly expert individuals to build their model of Norovirus transmission. The system dynamics approach allowed these specialists to exchange knowledge, to consider the whole system and to think together about reducing cases. Both the model core and methods for reducing transmission also have a lot in common with COVID-19, giving extra relevance. I enjoyed applying theory to a real problem and helping develop practical and implemented ideas for tackling it. I am delighted to see the work recognised via this award." Further details including a link to the Open Access paper and a video of the talk can be found at: <https://www.henley.ac.uk/news/2020/norovirus-modelling-study-by-henley-academics-and-food-standards-agency-wins-award>.

Prof David C Lane BSc MSc DPhil FORS
Chair in Business Informatics
Whiteknights Campus | Reading | RG6 6UD

2. NEW BOOKS, PUBLICATIONS AND SYSTEMS

2.1. Group Decision and Negotiation Handbook

In the last newsletter, Marc Kilgour and Colin Eden, as editors of the new GDN Handbook, reported that they were close to having all of the new chapters published on-line and available separately. They now state that they are moving towards the publication of the hard-back copy of the Handbook. This Springer Major Reference work should be published in 2021. All of the existing chapters will become unified in the style of the abstract, use of a set of keywords etc, so that readers can follow the book easily.

The book will have seven sections and 49 chapters:

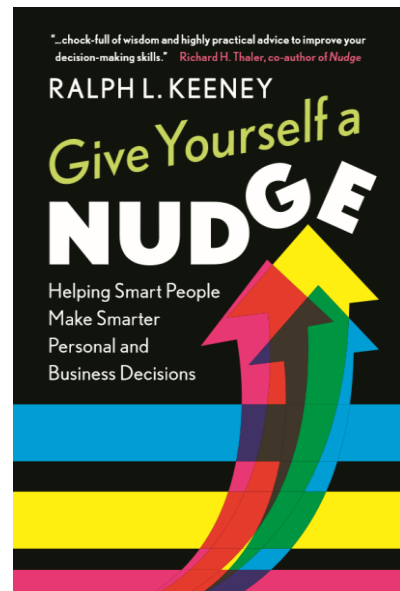
1. **Justice and Fairness in Negotiation.** What *should be* the objective of a group decision, or a negotiation? In this section, the implications of ideas of justice and principles of fairness on the outcome of a group decision or a negotiation of are explored.
2. **The Context for Group Decision and Negotiation.** In what circumstances should Group Decision and Negotiation principles and practices be invoked? In this section, the main issue is how GDN processes can fit into real problems.
3. **Crowd-Scale Group Decisions.** Many group decisions involve so many parties that communication is the major issue. In this section, the focus is on support systems aimed at communities, along with approaches to using voting to make a group decision.
4. **Game Theory Developments for Group Decision and Negotiation.** Game Theory has had a major influence on negotiation and group decision modeling, as demonstrated by several chapters in this section on approaches to negotiation and group decision that are, or are inspired by, game theory.
5. **Group Support Systems.** This section contains a review of approaches to supporting groups, including not only how the support systems work but also how they can be used improve decision-making and improve the group's understanding of itself.
6. **Multiple Criteria Analysis for Group Decisions.** Multiple criteria methods, which are well developed for single decision-maker problems, can be applied to group decision problems. In some instances, provision for uncertainty may be important.

7. **Electronic Negotiations.** Negotiating agents may negotiate with humans or other agents. This section contains a review of techniques, successes, and outcomes, as well as delineating the current status and likely developments of automatic negotiation.

2.2. Give Yourself a Nudge: Helping Smart People Make Smarter Personal and Business Decisions

by **Ralph L. Keeney.**

The best way to improve your quality of life is through the decisions you make. This book illustrates several fundamental decision-making skills, provides numerous applications and examples, and ultimately nudges you toward smarter decisions. These nudges frame more generating superior alternatives to those initially considered. All of the nudges are based on psychology and behavioral economics research and are accessible to all readers. The new concept of a decision opportunity is introduced, which involves creating a decision that you desire to face. Solving a decision opportunity improves your life, whereas resolving a decision problem only restores the quality of your life to that before the decision problem occurred. We all can improve our decision-making and enjoy the better quality of life that results. This book shows you how.



Endorsement: “Even though people make hundreds of choices each day, they rarely consider how to improve their decision-making skills. A good place to start is to read Ralph Keeney’s new book, which is chock-full of wisdom, stories, and highly practical advice. By the time you finish it, you will have the author whispering in your ear the next time you face a big decision.” Richard H Thaler, Professor of Economics and Behavioral Science, University of Chicago, co-author of *Nudge*, and winner of the 2017 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

About the Author: Ralph Keeney is Professor Emeritus at the Fuqua School of Business of Duke University and at the Viterbi School of Engineering at the University of Southern California. Throughout his career, he has been a professor and consultant on making important decisions for policy-makers, businesses, and

individuals. He received his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is a member of the US National Academy of Engineering, and has authored or co-authored several books, including Smart Choices, Value-Focused Thinking, and Decisions with Multiple Objectives. His website is ralphkeeney.com.

2.3. Smartsettle ONE: Early Trial Results

Success is the word most easily applied to the Smartsettle ONE trials in British Columbia, Canada. Currently half way through a 35 week pilot project sponsored by the Canadian government, ONE is boasting a 100% settlement rate, with a targeted outreach to the Coast Salish peoples, who make up the 11 member nations of the Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council.



The world's most advanced negotiation support systems, capable of supporting any type of formal negotiation, are built in Canada by iCan Systems. iCan's entry level product is Smartsettle ONE, which is an online collaboration system designed for simple negotiations that can be reduced to a single numerical issue. ONE aims to simplify the negotiation process and help parties settle disputes sooner. A complete process, supported by proprietary algorithms, guides users from the initial intake to a formal agreement.

The Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council has taken a leadership position in these trials, with their own Certified Smartsettle ONE Facilitators. Participants have embraced the clear and easy process, comparing it favourably with alternative options, such as working through a lengthy process in the courts.

The results of the trials are being used to improve the Smartsettle ONE system and processes and determine where it should be applied next. The feedback is designed to propel Smartsettle ONE into the marketplace.

This project comes at a time when interest in Online Dispute Resolution has exploded due to COVID-19 precautions and restrictions. Court processes were already under strain and are now forced to find alternative ways to resolve registered disputes. Traditional face-to-face mediations are no longer practical, and people are looking for ways to solve their problems online. There's no doubt that Smartsettle solutions will soon be adopted in resolution processes not only across Canada, but internationally as well.

Further Details: Innovative Solutions Canada - Testing Stream (ISC-TS) (formerly Build in Canada Innovation Program (BCIP)), along with Indigenous Services Canada, are sponsoring this trial project using the Smartsettle ONE eNegotiation

system to resolve disputes within the First Nations community. The testing period is expected to take eight months (Jul 2020 - Mar 2021). iCan Systems, the creators of Smartsettle, have partnered with the Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council (NmTC) to bring this project to life.

Visit smartsettle.com for more information.

Amanda Engen, BSW, MADR
Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council, Research Associate
Smartsettle, Community Project Lead



3. SPECIAL ISSUES IN MEMORIAM OF GREGORY KERSTEN

3.1. Group Decision & Negotiation journal Special Issue Announcement

Negotiation Systems and Studies: Celebrating the life and work of Gregory Kersten

Scope

Gregory Kersten, editor in chief of the GDN journal since 2016, passed away unexpectedly in May 2020. He was internationally known for his research on Group Decision and Negotiation both for his mathematical rigour but also for making mathematical models applicable in the real world. In the late 1990s, he developed the first web-based Negotiation Support System, called Inspire, which he made freely available for research and education in negotiation. With his own studies, and by making these systems available to many other researchers, Gregory Kersten pioneered empirical research in electronic negotiations which is now a well-established international research stream.

The Special Issue on “Negotiation Systems and Studies” will celebrate the life and work of Gregory Kersten by inviting papers that address research retrospective and advances in the area of negotiation systems and applications and empirical and conceptual negotiation research and negotiation studies. There are no preferred methodological stances for this special issue: It is open to conceptual, quantitative, or qualitative research, to research from a positivist, interpretivist, or critical perspective, to studies from the lab, from the field, design-oriented or developmental in nature

Topics

Topics of interest to the Special Issue include but are not limited to:

- Negotiation Support Systems
- Empirical negotiation research, e.g. learning, concession behaviour, communication, gamification
- AI in negotiation, e.g. predictive analytics, text mining, machine learning
- Trust in electronic negotiations
- Digital transformation of negotiations
- Emotions in electronic negotiations

- The future of negotiation research
- Historical / literature review of negotiation (systems) research
- Negotiations and other forms of collaborative decision making and conflict resolution
- Cross-cultural issues in negotiation
- Applications of negotiation systems and research

Timeline

- 15 January 2021: Paper submission deadline
- 1 March 2021: Reviewer feedback
- 1 April 2021: Revisions due
- 1 May 2021: Final reviewer feedback
- 1 June 2021: Final versions due

How to submit

To submit a manuscript, please go to <https://www.springer.com/journal/10726> and click on “Submit manuscript”. Select “S.I.: Negotiation Systems and Studies” for “Paper type”.

Further information

For any questions, please contact the special issue editors:

Mareike Schoop, University of Hohenheim, Germany, schoop@uni-hohenheim.de

Rudolf Vetschera, University of Vienna, Austria, rudolf.vetschera@univie.ac.at

3.2. Special Issue of the Control and Cybernetics (C&C) journal

A group of researchers representing a Polish community of scientist and academicians whose careers were linked to and shaped by Gregory and his achievements have decided to raise a special issue of the **Control and Cybernetics** journal devoted to Gregory Kersten. The journal is published in English by the Systems Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and is being indexed by a number of services and databases, including Scopus. Gregory Kersten has been an editorial board member of C&C for many years.

The editorial board has collected a number of interesting papers, however still there exist room for the contributions that refer to or were inspired by the Gregory’s research. The exemplary topics include models and algorithms for group decision and negotiation, decision support, negotiation support systems and electronic negotiation systems, empirical findings in use of formal models for supporting real

life group decision and negotiation problems, negotiation experiments and field studies, cross-culture and behavioral issues in negotiation and decision making.

The Editorial Board kindly invites to contribute to this issue. The deadline for sending the manuscripts is the end of December, 2020. There are no formal requirements for the style and length of the submissions.

For further questions please feel free to contact the C&C SI guest editors:

- **Ewa Roszkowska**, University of Białystok (e.roszkowska@uwb.edu.pl),
- **Bogumił Kamiński**, Warsaw School of Economics (bkamins@sgh.waw.pl),
- **Tomasz Wachowicz**, University of Economics in Katowice (tomasz.wachowicz@uekat.pl).

3.3. Special volume in Springer - Collective decisions: theory, algorithms and decision support systems

The commemorative volume *Collective decisions: theory, algorithms and decision support systems* dedicated to the memory of Professor Gregory Kersten is to be published in 2021 in Springer's Studies on Systems, Decision and Control. The volume will include papers by contributors whose scientific career and life have crossed with Gregory Kersten in one way or another. In general, the papers should either cover new topics and approaches but also be some state of the art or position paper type contributions which can be useful for the community, and even contain some interesting memories. Already, the editors have collected a set of interesting contributions, but they decided to not artificially limit their number.

Therefore, they invite to submit papers of potential authors who would be willing to participate in this project. For further questions please feel free to contact:

- **Tomasz Szapiro**, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, (tszapiro@gmail.com),
- **Janusz Kacprzyk**, Systems Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences, (kacprzyk@ibspan.waw.pl).

4. IMPRINTS

Eduarda Frej: newsletter@gdnconference.org; eafrej@cdsid.org.br

Danielle Morais: dcmorais@cdsid.org.br

Ginger Ke: gingerk@mun.ca

We are working on publishing the newsletter of the Group Decision and Negotiation Section of INFORMS two times a year, July and November. The deadline for the July issue is June 30, and the issue is intended to be published by the end of July. The deadline for the November issue is October 30, and the issue is intended to be published by the end of November. Contributions can be sent at any time to the editor (please see the address provided above).