OZR NEWSLETTER

March 2002

Death by PowerPoint
by John F. Raffensperger

It is 2:15 pm, the seventh presentation of the day. Another animated bullet point flips wildly across the screen and falls lockstep into place with the other choppy phrases. I think I get the basic idea, but I am rather lost on the details. Is the material really this hard, is the presenter doing a bad job, or am I simply dumb? Whatever the reason, afternoon tea is still 45 minutes away.

A hilarious example of How Not to Use PowerPoint is on the web site www.norvig.com/Gettysburg/. This is Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, not set to music, but rather set to data projector.

PowerPoint presentations (PPTs) tend to look alike, because many speakers use the same default templates. PPTs tend to be hard to understand because they are so often written as lists rather than in complete sentences. Finally, PPTs tend to be visually irritating, because many speakers misuse texture, colour, animation, and graphics. Here are some of my ideas about presentations, for what it's worth.

Much of the difficulty comes from misunderstanding graphics. We want to have a graphical presentation, because "a picture is worth a thousand words." Unfortunately, graphics are not all created equal.

Graphics come in four types: (1) meaningless, (2) tangentially meaningful, (3) illustrative, and (4) visual evidence.

1. A meaningless graphic conveys no information. All graphics in all PowerPoint templates are meaningless. They suggest content that does not exist, giving your audience the sense that you are using hype rather than giving real information.

Meaningless graphics take up visual space and cognitive capacity. They distract the reader's eye with a focal point that has no information. You want them to look at the real data, but they are busy looking at the noise. It is like a cell phone ringing during your speech.

Meaningless graphics crowd the text and illustrative graphics into a smaller space. "I can't stretch this chart, because I will cover up the template graphic." If you just take away the meaningless graphic, you have space to stretch the real information!

"Meaningless" graphics can actually have unintended meaning. For example, using a PowerPoint template, full of meaningless graphics, but without illustrative graphics suggests that you were in a hurry. Even worse is exposing the Start bar in a screen shot, with names of irrelevant programs. Worse still is a screen image of Excel with the Solitaire icon in the desktop. This may show something about Excel, but your audience will wonder how much time you spend playing Solitaire.

2. Tangentially meaningful graphics convey peripheral information, but shed no light on the data in the current focus or frame.
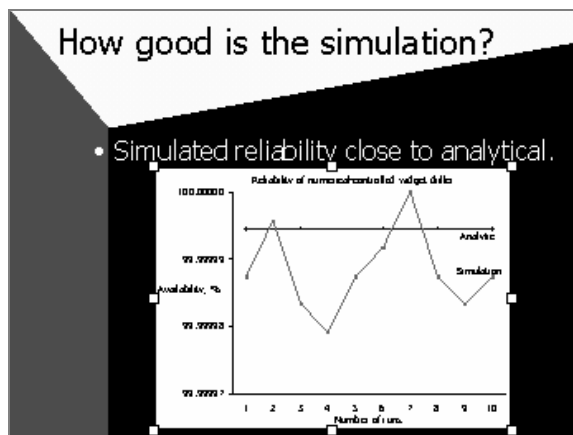
Headlines

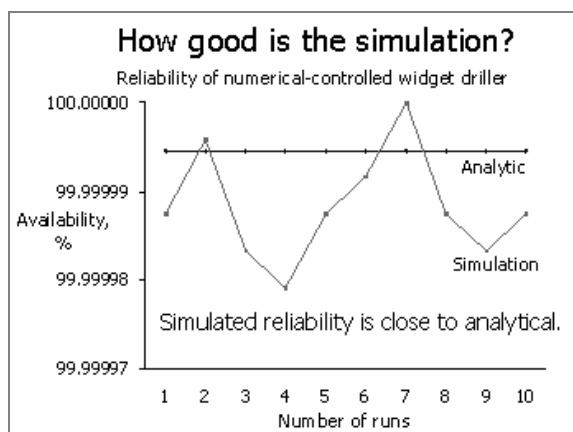*PowerPoint templates crowd out real data.*

Screen debris crowds out real data.
A title bar is just a tangential graphic.

The title bar for a screen image is tangentially meaningful at best. In the Excel screen image above, the title bar "Microsoft Excel – Polly's diet problem.xls" reminds the reader that the screen is an image from Excel, and shows the file name. However, without the title bar, the reader probably can guess that the screen is from Excel. The file name gives little help, unless the reader needs to access that file. The title bar and screen debris should be cropped.

The date and the file location (repeated on every slide!) are tangentially meaningful.

It is fashionable to use bullet points with incomplete sentences, and no period at the end, as though we have put the punctuation at the beginning, like an overbearing overgrown full stop.

- Bullet point dots
- Tangentially meaningful

The intention is to make the display scannable, but the actual effect is to create a low bandwidth display that requires synchronous audible explanation, at least a verb, from the speaker.

- Bullets use up horizontal space, which can force words on the line to break to the next line. This costs vertical space, and forces the viewer's eye to make a jump to complete an idea. The default spacing between the bullet and the text is not always right, so it takes extra time to fix.

At best, bullets only imply a hierarchical structure to the text, "this chunk of data is separate from that other chunk of data." In text, we provide this hierarchical structure with sentences and paragraphs. You do not need bullet points to show structure. The hierarchy can be conveyed more cleanly with blank space. To give information a hierarchical structure at the paragraph level, use indents or extra line space between paragraphs.

Bold or *italic* text, separator lines, boxes, background shading, oversize font, and table grids are often meaningless, though more often they are tangentially meaningful. We use these elements for attention-getting or boundary-making.

Attention getting is useful in a sea of noise. In the phone book, you might circle your friend's phone number in red, because that number may be the only useful information on a noisy page. On a road, the advertiser wants you to see his sign. But in your own presentation (or text or web page), the competing elements are your own data, not noise! When you already have your viewer's attention, hold it with real information. At most, you need only emphasise, but more likely, you need to reduce noise! Get attention by writing concisely and using good placement. Your viewer's attention is highest at the page's or sentence's beginning or end.

Boundary making is useful to show information structure. In a newspaper, information does not all flow from left to right and top to bottom, since advertisements break up related text, and unrelated stories are adjacent. These unrelated chunks are appropriately separated with strong visual elements.

But if you are not in the publishing business, your presentation should be one topic, and the information should flow from left to right and top to bottom. Except for changes in font to outline document structure, boundaries are best shown with white space, not boxes or lines.

Boxes around tables, graphs, and images take up space, which force the real data image to be smaller. If you must add a line or a box, tone it down by making it thin and grey.

After you have added an attention-getting or boundary-making element (and certainly when you are proofreading), question the need for it: "Is it really that much better if I put this in a box? Is bold really useful here?" Most of the time, you are better off spending that effort on careful wording (mainly making it concise) and genuine illustration.

3. With illustrative graphics, meaning in the text is translated into a graphic. Well-chosen clip art is often directly meaningful. A question or problem can be illustrated as a cartoon character with a question mark over its head. A presentation about supply chain management can be illustrated with a picture of a truck or warehouse. Directly meaningful graphics may humour, but not explain, as with the ironic "search for meaning" below.

We remember pictures better than we remember text. Pictures also help us refer to a particular slide. At the end of a presentation, a listener in the audience may with to refer back to a slide. With a good picture, he might say, "Could you please go back to the slide with the dragon?" Without a good picture, he will say, "Could you please go back to the slide where you were talking something about legends?" With a good picture, recognizing the slide will be easier.

So how can you find directly meaningful graphics? First, read the text on your slide. Use the awesome force of your magnificent imagination, and try to think of a picture that describes or relates to the text. If you cannot find something on your own computer, Microsoft Clip Gallery on-line has heaps of art, in spite of our search for meaning above.

> *Is it really that much better if I put this in a box?*

Photographs provide context and visual richness. Borrow a digital camera and take an afternoon to get photos for your presentation. Get pictures of the front of your client's building, of you with your client at his office, of other related sites, objects, or people. The photos do not have to be professionally done; snapshots look real. These photos will literally show your audience who you are talking about and what you are talking about, providing your audience with a sense of context.

4. The most powerful kind of graphic is visual evidence. With visual evidence, the graphic itself contains the real information, which is translated into the text. The text gets its meaning from the graphic, and only interprets the graphic. You know it is visual evidence if you can introduce it to your audience by saying, "Let me show you what I mean."

These graphics are the most difficult to find or create. With visual evidence, a picture really substitutes for words. I used the phrase "evidence" to make you think about a legal proceeding. A graphic used in a legal proceeding must be authoritative and convincing. When attempting to convict someone of a crime, a clip art "screen bean" character holding a gun is laughable, but a few frames of grainy video could bring a conviction.

When you think about graphics in PowerPoint, try substituting the word "illustration" or "visual evidence" for "graphic." The word "graphic" suggests that meaningless visuals are somehow useful or entertaining: "My presentation has many graphics," versus "My presentation has many illustrations." Use illustrations and visual evidence, not graphics.

I have written more on this at my web site, http://www.mang.canterbury.ac.nz/people/jfraffen /WritingSuggestions_files/PresentationSuggestions.htm.

John F. Raffensperger,
j.raffensperger@mang.canterbury.ac.nz.

Letter from the President
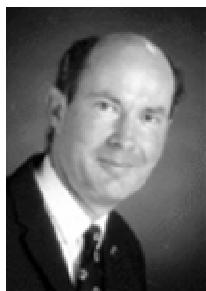
First a big thank you to the outgoing members of the ORSNZ Council: Tiru Arthanari (Auckland Branch Chair) and Kerry Mayes. Your work and loyalty have been much appreciated. Next, it is pleasing to note, for the sake of continuity and for their abilities, that many members are carrying on: John Davies (Vice President), Chuda Basnet (Secretary), Kevin Broad, John Buchanan, Jim Corner, Shane Dye, Graeme Everett, Vicky Mabin (now Liaison Officer), Andrew Mason (Web Site Coordinator), Nicola Petty, Andy Philpott (now Auckland Branch Chair), David Boland (Wellington Branch Chair), and Fritz Raffensperger (Christchurch Branch Chair and Newsletter Editor). Your continued experience and expertise is most valuable. Now, a hearty welcome to the new Council members: Cameron Walker (Treasurer), Eric Deakins, Stu Dillon, and Matthias Ehrgott (Conference Secretary). Finally, a warm note of appreciation to Joan Mawson (Newsletter Coordinator). I look forward to working with you, and indeed all members of the Society – please don't hesitate to contact me.

2001 was a watershed year for ORSNZ, which saw policy changes relating to Visiting Lecturer Scholarships, Branch and Conference costs, and student conference travel grants. An increase in student membership and the reinstatement of an annual budget were two more milestones. More importantly, two major institutions were inaugurated – the ORSNZ Hans Daellenbach Prize, and the Summer Vacation Project.

The format for Visiting Lecturer Scholarships has finally settled down and is indicated, in the call for nominations, elsewhere in this newsletter. After some debate, policies on how ORSNZ can encourage branch meetings and support the annual conference (especially in aiding student members to attend) have been agreed. The latter is important, as there has been a significant rise in student membership. Naturally, policy on these and other issues must, of necessity, be dynamic to reflect changing circumstances and new opportunities. These matters brought to a head the fact that the Society obviously needs an annual budget in order to manage its financial affairs. So one was devised for the first time in a number of years.

The ORSNZ Hans Daellenbach Prize was awarded for the first time last year. The unanimous decision of the prize panel was to award the inaugural Prize to Professor David Ryan, of the Department of Engineering Science, of the University of Auckland for his focussed and groundbreaking body of work on scheduling problems, and its application to crew scheduling in the New Zealand airline industry. This is an excellent example of the kind of theoretical and applied work that this award is designed to recognize. The awarding of the Prize was one of many happy occasions at the 2001 Annual Conference. The Summer Vacation Project was also awarded for the first time last year. The project panel awarded the sponsorship to World Vision to carry out OR work proposed and overseen by Graeme Everett. The project involves constructing a decision support tool to assist World Vision to plan marketing strategies and address questions concerning advertising fund allocation.

> ## 2001 was a watershed year for ORSNZ

In the next newsletter I plan to outline some of the developments that are mooted for ORSNZ this year. I welcome your suggestions for these and am happy to discuss them and any other Society matters with you.

Les Foulds, lfoulds@waikato.ac.nz

Puzzles

Supply the words beginning with the upper case letters in the phrases below. For instance, the first is "Days in a Week."

> 7, D in a W.
> 52, C in a P (or C in a D).
> 40, H in a WW.
> 7, DS.
> 366, D in a LY.
> 101, D.
> 6, W of H the E.
> 14, L in a S.
> 2004, OG in A.
> 1492, C S T O B.
> 26, L in the A.

Les Foulds, lfoulds@waikato.ac.nz.

Call for ORSNZ Young Researcher for ORSJ in 2002

The Operations Research Society of Japan (ORSJ) invites a Young Researcher from ORSNZ to present a paper at the Annual Conference of ORSJ, to be held in Japan in early May, 2002.

The Young Researcher must be a member of ORSNZ and be under 40 years of age at the time of application.

A Young Researcher Panel, appointed by the President of ORSNZ, will consider making an award in April.

Applicants must submit a two-page abstract of a talk on that they plan to give at the Annual Conference of ORSJ.

The successful applicant must travel to Japan and present a 20minute paper based on their abstract at the ORSJ Conference. All reasonable costs of attending the conference, including return economy class travel, will be met by ORSJ.

The successful applicant must submit a report on their trip to the June 2002 ORSNZ Newsletter.

Enquiries concerning, or nominations for, the ORSNZ Young Researcher for ORSJ in 2002 should be sent to Les Foulds, President, ORSNZ.

Call for ORSNZ Visiting Lecturer Scholarships in 2002

The number of scholarships awarded is normally at most two per year. ORSNZ will award scholarships to worthy candidates, according to available funds.

A Visiting Lecturer Panel, appointed by the President, will consider making awards twice yearly. The emolument of each scholarship is up to $1000. ORSNZ will not normally entertain the payment of additional costs to Visiting Lecturers.

Each Visiting Lecturer must give a talk on some topic of general interest to ORSNZ members at each of: Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch. A plenary address at the ORSNZ Annual Conference is acceptable as one of the talks. However, in this case, a talk on a different topic must be given at the other three centres.

Each candidate must be nominated by an ORSNZ member ("the Champion").

The Champion must coordinate the visit of the Visiting Lecturer to each of the four centres.

Enquiries concerning, or nominations for, ORSNZ Visiting Lecturer Scholarships for 2002 should be sent to Les Foulds, President, ORSNZ.

Call for papers: 37th Annual Conference of the ORSNZ 2002

The 37th ORSNZ annual conference will be held at the University of Auckland on November 29 and November 30 (with a welcome function on the evening of the 28th).

Submission of abstracts: 31 July 2002. Submission of full papers: 31 October 2002. Please send your abstracts by email to conference@orsnz.org.

Further information will be posted on the website www.orsnz.org.nz/conf (coming soon). You can contact the organizers at conference@orsnz.org.nz.

Canterbury News

Grant Read has retired! Though officially done, Grant is moving to an adjunct role. He is still occasionally in the office to help out with Honours (purely for love).

Grant Read has retired!

Ross James is still away on sabbatical at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania.

Lawrence Wein, our distinguished Erskine visitor, has been working on several OR problems in medicine and health care, including an NIH-supported project (with Ed Kaplan, Yale University) on an optimal emergency response to a smallpox bio-terrorist attack.

Meanwhile, Larry's wife Anne has been helping out around the Department with tutoring.

We have two new hires who will be joining us soon, John Giffin from Massey, and Cita Wood from the U.K. We look forward to having you aboard!

Our Honours year is going well. Christchurch business really came to the table to support us this year. We had more projects and clients than we could do with eight students! All the projects look to be top quality management science.

John F. Raffensperger,
j.raffensperger@mang.canterbury.ac.nz.

Auckland News

The biggest recent news in Auckland is that The New Zealand Institute for Mathematics and its Applications (with joint directors: Professor Marston Conder, and Professor Vaughan Jones) has been chosen to be a centre of research excellence by the CoRE Fund Committee. This will enhance the growth of mathematical research at Auckland University, as well as encourage the development of models for its application. We are hoping that OR will be a major beneficiary of this development.

The OR Group has expanded at Auckland with the appointment of (newly appointed ORSNZ treasurer) Dr Cameron Walker to a position in the Commerce Faculty, and Dr Michael O'Sullivan to a lecturing position in Engineering Science. Cameron is an accomplished graph theorist who has successfully made the transition to OR expert, and Michael has just completed a PhD in Stanford's EEOR department. The Engineering Science department now has two Michael O'Sullivans in its faculty (as well as a grad student M. O'Sullivan) so there has been a lot of misdirected email. With the return of ¾ of Golbon Zakeri back to the department after a period of parental leave, we have the best staffing situation I can remember.

> *…cans of ORSNZ beer in return for signatures on ORSNZ student membership…*

In Engineering Science a few of us have been travelling over the summer break. Dave Ryan is on leave in the UK. He is visiting Brian Foster in Abingdon near Oxford. Matthias Ehrgott has just returned from one month in Europe, spending time in Spain where he gave a number of talks, and attending the International Conference on Multi-Criteria Decision Making in Austria. Matthias presented his joint work with Dave Ryan on multi-criteria roster optimisation, and their paper was awarded the Wiley Prize for the best applied paper in multi-criteria decision analysis. Andrew Mason also spent time in Europe over Christmas adjudicating at David Nielsen's (successful) PhD oral exam. Andrew tells me that David's thesis was entitled "A broad-application optimisation-based rostering model", and he has also given me a plausible explanation why it was sensible to travel to Europe for his own PhD student's oral examination.

This Friday the Auckland Branch of ORSNZ will host their annual student induction ceremony trading cans of ORSNZ beer in return for signatures on ORSNZ student membership forms. This proved to be big success in 2001 in stimulating student interest in OR, at least for the first fortnight of the academic year! We offer free ORSNZ student membership to students topping our OR/MS courses. The implicit contract is that they must enter the Young Practitioner Prize.

Andrew Mason, a.mason@auckland.ac.nz.

Waikato News

After the November INFORMS conference in Miami, Jim Corner spent time with colleagues in Ohio, Indiana, and Los Angeles. He met up with Dick Deckro at the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio, to discuss various ongoing projects using decision analysis.

While much of the work there is classified by the US Air Force, Jim does boast that he gets to be a "simulated colonel" while visiting. He needs this rank to be in authority over most of the students, who are ex-fighter pilots, career officers, and even astronauts in training. He reports that it is nice to get salutes from students, to be called "sir" at the start and end of each sentence, and to have all doors opened for him!

After Dayton, he visited an old colleague at Purdue in Indiana, then spent time in LA renewing friendships with colleagues at the Rand Corporation. Most of the work his colleagues seem to be doing there these days relates to generating optimisation models for downsizing US military forces.

> *It is nice to get salutes from students.*

While in LA, he had a tour of JD Power, which does a lot of customer surveying. The department he spent time with mainly does data mining of customer survey data in the automotive industry. Some of the work they do is contract research for the industry, but the extensive database they hold allows them mostly to endlessly perform speculative mining and reporting (for profit) back to the industry.

Jim Corner, jcorner@waikato.ac.nz.

Wellington News

Wellingtonians send their love.

David Boland, Chairman, Wellington Branch

Call for Papers, special issue of Annals of Operations Research

Staff Scheduling and Rostering: Theory and Applications. Authors are invited to submit their papers electronically by email to the Guest Editors, in either postscript or pdf format. To be considered for this publication, papers must be received by 31 July 2002. www.baltzer.nl/journalhome.htm/0254-5330.

Call for Papers, EJORS

Balancing Assembly and Transfer Lines. The aim of the special issue is to present math models and methods for generalized production line balancing problems. Deadline: May 1, 2002. Alexandre Dolgui, Univ. of Technology, Troyes, France, dolgui@utt.fr. www.elsevier.com /homepage/sae/orms/eor/menu.htm

Meetings Calendar

2-5 Apr 2002, 31st Annual Meeting of Western Decision Sciences Institute, MGM Grand, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. http://misnt.calpoly.edu/wdsi

2 to 6 June 2002, 7th Valencia International Meeting on Bayesian Statistics, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain. The deadline for abstracts for contributed papers is 10 April 2002. http://www.uv.es/valencia7

1-6 Jul 2002, 2nd International Conference On The Teaching Of Mathematics (at the undergraduate level), Island of Crete, Greece. http://www.math.uoc.gr/~ictm2/

7-10 July 2002, AWOCA 2002. The Australasian Workshop on Combinatorial Algorithms will be hosted by the University of Queensland, with the venue being Kingfisher Bay Resort, Fraser Island, Queensland. Paper submission deadline is 12 Apr 2002. www.maths.uq.edu.au/~njc/awoca/awoca2002

7-10 Jul 2002, 7th International Conference of the UKSS, Systems Research & Practice in the Knowledge Age, University of York, England. Email: UKSSConference2002@hotmail.com.

7-12 Jul 2002, Algorithmic Number Theory Symposium V, University of Sydney. ANTS-V will be held at the School of Mathematics and Statistics of the University of Sydney and will be organised by the MAGMA Computational Algebra Group. ants5@maths.usyd.edu.au, http://www.maths.usyd.edu.au:8000/u/ants5.

7-11 Jul 2003, 5th International Congress on Industrial & Applied Maths, Darling Harbour, Australia, http://www.iciam.org.

31 Jul - 2 Aug 2002, International Conference on Project Management, Marina Mandarin Hotel, Singapore. Merlin Toh, Conference Secretariat Nayang Technological University, email: ProMAC2002@ntu.edu.sg, http://www.ntu.edu.sg/MPE/ProMAC2002.

29 Sep - 3 Oct 2002, 5th Biennial Conference of the Engineering Mathematics and Applications Conference, Gardens Point Campus, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. www.icms.com.au/emac02.

18-22 Nov 2002, Joint meeting, 4th Asia-Pacific Conference on Simulated Evolution and Learning, 9th International Conference on Neural Information Processing, International Conference on Fuzzy Systems and Knowledge Discovery, Orchid Country Club, Singapore. http://www.ntu.edu.sg/home/nef. Paper summary deadline 30 Apr 2002.

29-30 Nov 2002, 37th Annual ORSNZ Conference, University of Auckland, Auckland, NZ, http://www.orsnz.org.nz/conf.

9-12 Dec 2002, ICDM '02, IEEE International Conference on Data Mining, Maebashi TERRSA, Maebashi City, Japan. The 2002 IEEE International Conference on Data Mining. Professor Ning Zhong (ICDM '02), Department of Information Engineering, Maebashi Institute of Technology, zhong@maebashi-it.ac.jp, http://kis.maebashi-it.ac.jp/icdm02
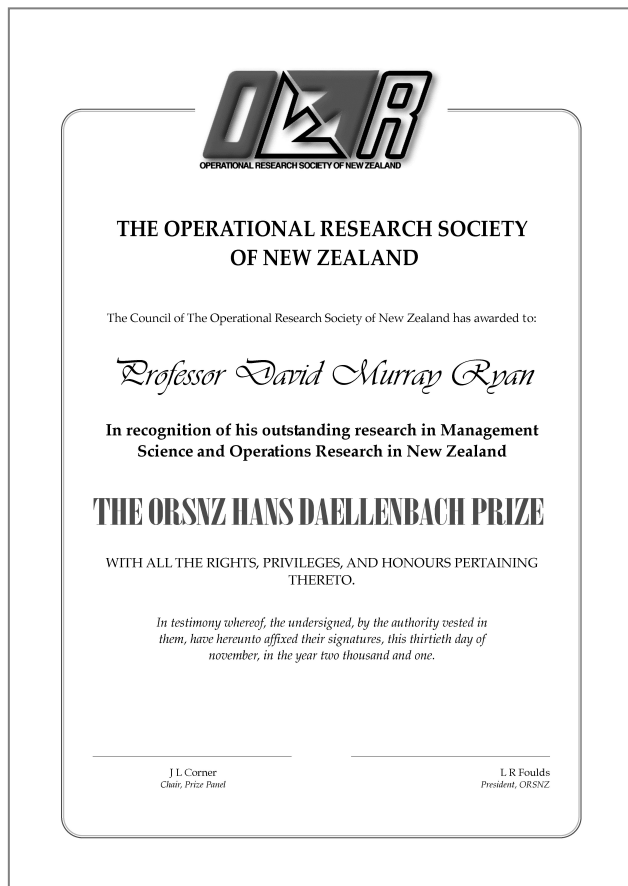
Minutes of Council Meeting

Date: 16 Nov 2001, 3:00 pm. (Votes were taken by email up to 28th Nov.),
Place: MS8.01, University of Waikato, Hamilton

Attending: Chuda Basnet, John Buchanan, Jim Corner (by proxy), Les Foulds.
Email inputs from: Graeme Everett, John Davies, Vicky Mabin, John Raffensperger, Kevin Broad, Andrew Mason, and David Boland. **Apologies:** David Boland.

A. Minutes of the July 2001 meeting of the ORSNZ Council. The minutes were accepted by everyone who was present.

B. Matters arising from the Minutes of the July 2001 Meeting of the ORSNZ Council:

1. Visiting lecturer scholarship. There was a motion from the Chair that the award of Visiting Lecturer Scholarships be limited to a maximum of two per year, to a maximum amount of $1000 each. *Voting: 6 votes in favour, 0 against, and 2 positive remarks (with slight upward and downward variations), Carried.*

2. Summer vacation projects. There was a motion from the Chair that approval be given to Graeme Everett's Summer Vacation Project proposal relating to World Vision, with the proviso that he finds a suitable student and arranges adequate supervision, with reimbursement to be limited to a maximum of $5000. *Voting: 6 votes in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions. Carried.*

3. Student Grants-in –Aid for the 2001 Conference. There was a motion from the Chair that all seven student member applicants be paid an economy return airfare to Christchurch, to a maximum of $250.00, and one ticket for the conference banquet. *Voting: 8 votes in favour, 0 against. Carried.*

4. Publicising the ORSNZ. There was a motion from the Chair that the consideration of developing publicity materials, such as brochures and posters, and of enhancing the ORSNZ website be deferred until the next financial year's budgeting process, which will begin in July 2002. *Voting: 7 votes in favour, 1 abstention, and 0 against. Carried.*

C. Expenditure of Society funds. There was a motion from the Chair that authority be given to the President of the Society to spend up to a maximum total of $4000 on documenting the processes of the Society and on developing the membership database. *Voting: 8 votes in favour, 0 against. Carried.*

D. Venues of future conferences. Les Foulds proposed a rotating schedule of conference venues, with opportunistic inclusion of other venues as circumstances allowed. This schedule is Auckland (2002), Hamilton (2003), Wellington (2004), and Christchurch (2005). *Voting: 10 votes in favour, 0 against. Carried.*

E. Other Business.

5. IFORS Return. Vicky Mabin proposed that the IFORS return be completed each year by hand. *Voting: 5 votes in favour, 0 against. Carried.*

6. IAOR Editorship. Les Foulds proposed that the duties of the President of the Society should include being the New Zealand Contributing Editor to the *International Abstracts in Operational Research. Voting: 5 votes in favour, 0 against. Carried.*

7. IFORS Candidacy. Vicky Mabin proposed that the application of the following societies for membership of IFORS: Operations Research Society of Bangladesh, Columbian Society of Operations Research, and for the Application of Resource Modelling Association for kindred membership of IFORS be supported. *Voting: 5 votes in favour, 0 against. Carried.*

8. Approval of Branch Reports. Les Foulds proposed that the branch reports of the Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch Branches be approved. *Voting: 7 votes in favour, 0 against. Carried.*

THE OPERATIONAL RESEARCH SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

The Council of The Operational Research Society of New Zealand has awarded to:

Professor David Murray Ryan

In recognition of his outstanding research in Management Science and Operations Research in New Zealand

THE ORSNZ HANS DAELLENBACH PRIZE

WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND HONOURS PERTAINING THERETO.

In testimony whereof, the undersigned, by the authority vested in them, have hereunto affixed their signatures, this thirtieth day of november, in the year two thousand and one.

J L Corner
Chair, Prize Panel

L R Foulds
President, ORSNZ

9.   Lapse of membership of ORSNZ. Vicky Mabin expressed concern that membership of ORSNZ is terminated rather quickly when the dues are not paid. She suggested a very gradual process with reminder letters, stronger wordings, and eliciting reasons for withdrawals. This was noted, and it was felt that her suggestions should be adopted when the processes of ORSNZ are formally documented.

Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting of the ORSNZ

Date: 30 November 2001. **Time:** 5:50 pm. **Place:** Riccarton House, 16 Kahu Road, Christchurch
Attending: Chuda Basnet, Kevin Broad, Shane Dye, Matthias Ehrgott, Les Foulds (in the Chair), John George, Vicky Mabin, Andrew Mason, Alistair McNaughton, Phil Neame, Nicola Petty, Andy Philpott, Fritz Raffensperger, Brendan Ring, and Cameron Walker.
Apologies: Tiru Arthanari, David Boland, John Buchanan, Jim Corner, Kerry Mayes, and John Paynter.
Minuted by: Chuda Basnet

B.   Minutes of 2000 AGM: Les Foulds proposed that the minutes of the previous AGM (as sent out to all paid-up members) be accepted as true and correct. Seconded: Shane Dye. Carried unanimously.

C.   Matters arising from the 2000 AGM: None.

D.   President's Report. The report was circulated at the meeting. Les Foulds made a short presentation, highlighting membership growth from students, and proposed future conference venues. He expressed appreciation over the distinction and contribution of the visiting scholars for this year. He drew the attention to the two council meetings, the inaugural ORSNZ Hans Daellenbach Prize presented this year, and to the summer project award to World Vision. He gave thanks to all the people associated with the Society.

E.   Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer's report and the Auditor's report for the 2000-2001 financial year were sent out to all members with the notice of the AGM. Kevin Broad pointed out that the 2000 annual conference did not make as much money as the 1999 conference, which resulted in a deficit. Even though the budget for 2001 -2002 showed deficits, he felt that these were one-off, and an increase in membership fee was not merited. He also felt that if the Society wanted to spend money for web-site or publicity, nothing was to be gained by deferring these expenses.

F.   Membership Fees. Andrew Mason proposed that all the subscription fees stay unchanged for the forthcoming year. Seconded: Andy Philpott. Carried unanimously.

G.   Honorary Auditor. The current auditor, Paul Rosse, was nominated for the next year by Andrew Mason, Seconded: John George. Carried unanimously.

H.   Conference Venue. Andy Philpott proposed that the next annual conference be held at Auckland around late November / early December. The specific dates are to be decided later.

I.   Election of Officers. The election of Society officers was chaired by John George. The following nominations were received.

Position	Nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
President	Les Foulds	Andrew Mason	Andy Philpott
Vice President	John Davies	Vicky Mabin	Les Foulds
Treasurer	Cameron Walker	Andy Philpott	Chuda Basnet
Secretary	Chuda Basnet	Vicky Mabin	Shane Dye
Council Members	Kevin Broad	Vicky Mabin	Andy Philpott
	John Buchanan	Chuda Basnet	Les Foulds
	Jim Corner	Chuda Basnet	Les Foulds
	Eric Deakins	Les Foulds	Chuda Basnet
	Stuart Dillon	Les Foulds	Chuda Basnet
	Shane Dye	Andy Philpott	John Raffensperger
	Matthias Ehrgott	Andrew Mason	Andy Philpott
	Graeme Everett	Les Foulds	Vicky Mabin
Liaison Officer	Vicky Mabin	Les Foulds	John Raffensperger
	Andrew Mason	Vicky Mabin	Shane Dye
	Nicola Petty	John Raffensperger	Shane Dye
Auckland Branch Chair	Andy Philpott	Andrew Mason	Kevin Broad
Wellington Branch Chair	David Boland	Vicky Mabin	Chuda Basnet
Christchurch Branch Chair	John Raffensperger	Shane Dye	Nicola Petty

John George proposed that all nominees be elected to these positions. Seconded: John Raffensperger. Carried unanimously.

J.   Other Business

1.   Les Foulds Away. Les Foulds informed the meeting that he may be away for the second half of 2002 and may make it difficult for him to function as the Society President. Vicky Mabin suggested delegating tasks to the Vice-President. John Raffensperger suggested that the problem could be alleviated by electronic communications.

2.   Thanks to David Boland. Vicky Mabin proposed a vote of thanks to David Boland for his stewardship of the Wellington Branch. Carried with acclamation.

3.   Thanks to John Raffensperger. Les Foulds proposed a vote of thanks to John Raffensperger and his Committee for hosting ORSNZ Twenty Naught One. Carried with acclamation.

4.   Thanks to Kevin Broad. Les Foulds proposed a vote of thanks to Kevin Broad for his service as Society Treasurer in 2000-2001. Carried with acclamation.

5.   Hosting APORS Meeting. Vicky Mabin sounded out interest in hosting the APORS conference in 2007. Andy Philpott felt that it did not do much for ORSNZ. There was a general feeling that further information, including the financial implications for ORSNZ was needed before a decision could be made. John George moved that the Council examines the opportunity of hosting APORS in 2007 and to bring a recommendation to the AGM. Les Foulds invited Vicky Mabin to investigate the matter. Carried unanimously.

6.   Thanks to outgoing ORSNZ Council. John George proposed a vote of thanks to Les Foulds and other Council members. Carried with acclamation.

7.   The meeting closed at 7:00 PM.

ORSNZ Council Meeting

Date: Friday, 30 November 2001
Time: 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm
Venue: Engineering School, University of Canterbury

Present: Tiru Arthanari, Chuda Basnet, Shane Dye, Graeme Everett, Les Foulds (in the Chair), Vicky Mabin, Nicola Petty, Andy Philpott, and John Raffensperger.

L. Foulds: Les opened the discussion by welcoming everyone to the meeting and followed on by saying the Society needs to be a learning organization in the sense that its major processes are documented. There are questions like "what do we do about the newsletter, how do I organise a conference? etc. It is inefficient, as at present, to have important procedural information residing only in the heads of certain members. This is because newcomers don't know who to ask and there is unnecessary relearning. Documentation of some of the main processes of the Society is needed so if someone says, "I have been asked to find or coordinate something", one can say, "look on the Society's website". We can use it as a chance to improve processes. The Microsoft Access-based membership database also needs to be upgraded. It could have links on the Web. I would like your help to come up with list of topics and a mechanism for a way forward.

A. Philpott: The documentation process happens on an on-going basis and we must undertake to document this as we go, for example, what Fritz has done this year. As a new newsletter comes out, the process must be documented and added as we go through.

N. Petty: It makes sense to have roles and processes documented.

L. Foulds: Commented on what a great job Fritz and his colleagues have done regarding the newsletter and the 2001 conference.

S. Dye: Stated that the information needs to be comprehensive and easily accessible to include Society processes, sub-headings, hot keys etc, all on the Society website.

V. Mabin: Asked if it will be accessible to anyone or just to members of the Society?

L. Foulds: Replied that it is costly and difficult to create restrictions via passwords. Thus, apart from possibly a small amount of financial information, it may as well all be openly available.

V. Mabin: Concerned that people applying for various things have access to the criteria. It needs to be made clear that the criteria will vary from time to time.

S. Dye: There is the security issue in terms of documentation and a potential for hackers to destroy information so it would need to be backed up.

L. Foulds: volunteered to be the repository for information. The Web would be a good place – people can see the information simply and easily. We have $4,000 available to make this documentation and membership upgrade a reality and ensure we have an effective membership database and processes. This was passed at the November 2001 Council Meeting.

L. Foulds: Andrew Mason produced a list of items that should be a part of the membership database. I have produced a list of processes that I believe should be documented. You are welcome to make suggested alterations to both lists.

V. Mabin: Is the Constitution on the website?

L. Foulds: Yes. The Constitution is an important document. However we need other information available.

J. Raffensperger: Replied he had help from his colleagues and didn't see much point in documenting. Tasks included getting the papers in, developing the proceedings, arranging the food, the schedule, and using last year's programme.

A. Mason: Commented that every previous conference is on the Web.

L. Foulds: I would like to approach individuals to document Society processes and send them to me.

N. Petty: Raised the question of the Young Practitioners Prize and the process to decide the criteria. This was because members of certain universities may feel that their students are being disenfranchised by the present policy.

L. Foulds: This is an example of the merits of improving the Society's processes and documenting them.

V. Mabin: It is hard to discuss things over email and is much easier to do so face-to-face.

S. Dye: Instigate a Council meeting after the Annual General Meeting at future conferences.

L. Foulds: That is another excellent idea. It shall be actioned at the next conference.

L. Foulds: What we need is a commitment to membership database and process improvement and documentation on the Society's website in a transparent fashion.

L. Foulds volunteered to orchestrate and correlate the formal documentation of improved Society processes and the membership database.

J. Raffensperger: Commented again he didn't see the point and it wasn't a big deal.

L. Foulds: It is important that learning and knowledge of processes is readily available and also is not lost.

N. Petty: Are you talking about the membership database or processes?

L. Foulds: Both.

V. Mabin: Need documentation about how to run Council Meetings, Annual General Meetings etc.

N. Petty: There are protocols – when things need to come in by, when they need to be sent out by etc.

L. Foulds: What Vicky and Nicola have just mentioned are examples of processes. Management of the membership database also needs to be improved and documented.

L. Foulds ended the meeting by saying that all Council members are invited to send descriptions of processes to him. He will be ask members to compose descriptions of certain processes He will then coordinate them and send them to the Council for comment. He then thanked all members for attending and for their input.

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm.

Officers of the Operational Research Society of New Zealand: 2002

President
Les Foulds
Department of Management Systems
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton
Phone: 64 (7) 838 4127
Fax: 64 (7) 838 4270
lfoulds@waikato.ac.nz

Vice President
John Davies
SBPM
Victoria University of Wellington
P.O. Box 600, Wellington
Phone: 64 (4) 463 5382
Fax: 64 (4) 463 5253
john.davies@vuw.ac.nz

Treasurer
Cameron Walker
Business School
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Phone: 64 (9) 373 7599 ext 7009
Fax: 64 (9) 373 7468
c.walker@auckland.ac.nz

Secretary
Chuda Basnet
Department of Management Systems
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton
Phone: 64 (7) 838 4562
Fax: 64 (7) 838-4270
chuda@waikato.ac.nz

Council Members
Kevin Broad
ORBIT Systems
PO Box 113-200
Broadway Post Centre, Auckland
Phone: 64 (9) 523 5407
Fax: 64 (9) 523 5402
kevin.broad@orbitsystems.co.nz

John Buchanan
Department of Management Systems
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton
Phone: 64 (7) 838 4470
Fax: 64 (7) 838 4270
jtb@waikato.ac.nz

Jim Corner
Department of Management Systems
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton
Phone: 64 (7) 838 4563
Fax: 64 (7) 838 4270
jcorner@waikato.ac.nz

Eric Deakins
Department of Management Systems
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton
Phone: 64 (7) 838 4565
Fax: 64 (7) 838 4270
edeakins@waikato.ac.nz

Stuart Dillon
Department of Management Systems
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton
Phone: 64 (7) 838 4234
Fax: 64 (7) 838 4270
sdillon@waikato.ac.nz

Shane Dye
Department of Management
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Phone: 64 (3) 364 2987 ext 6886
Fax: 64 (3) 364 2020
s.dye@mang.canterbury.ac.nz

Matthias Ehrgott
Department of Engineering Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Phone: 64 (9) 373 7599 ext 2421
Fax: 64 (9) 373 7468
m.ehrgott@auckland.ac.nz

Graeme Everett
Norske-Skog Ltd
Tasman Pulp and Paper Mill
Private Bag 3083, Kawerau
Phone: 64 (7) 323 3708
Fax: 64 (7) 323 3699
Graeme.Everett@norske-skog.co.nz

Vicky Mabin (**Liaison**)
SBPM, Victoria Univ. of Wellington
P.O. Box 600, Wellington
Phone: 64 (4) 463 5140
Fax: 64 (4) 463 5253
vicky.mabin@vuw.ac.nz

Andrew Mason
Department of Engineering Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Phone: 64 (9) 373 7599 ext 7909
Fax: 64 (9) 373 7468
a.mason@auckland.ac.nz

Nicola Petty
Department of Management
The University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Phone: 64 (3) 364 2190
Fax: 64 (3) 364 2020
n.petty@mang.canterbury.ac.nz

Branch Chairs
Andy Philpott (Auckland)
Department of Engineering Science
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Phone: 64 (9) 373 7599 ext 8394
Fax: 64 (9) 373 7468
a.philpott@auckland.ac.nz

David Boland (Wellington)
Boland Associates Limited
4 Hicks Crescent, Waikanae
Phone: 64 (4) 902 3889
boland.d@paradise.net.nz

Fritz Raffensperger
(Christchurch/ Newsletter Editor)
Department of Management
The University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Phone: 64 (3) 364 2987 ext 8616
Fax: 64 (3) 364 2020.
j.raffensperger@mang.canterbury.ac.nz

Newsletter Coordinator
Joan Mawson
Department of Management
The University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800, Christchurch
Phone: 64 (3) 364 2987 ext 6606
Fax: 64 (3) 364 2020.
j.mawson@mang.canterbury.ac.nz

See the ORSNZ web site at http://www.orsnz.org.nz. Email: secretary@orsnz.org.nz.

To apply for membership or buy subscriptions, see the application form on our web site, and mail it to:
Membership Secretary, ORSNZ, PO Box 6544, Wellesley Street, Auckland, NZ.