

Decision making and knowledge management  
in inquiring organizations: toward a new  
decision-making paradigm for DSS.

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## Decision Support Systems

Volume 31, Issue 1, May 2001, Pages 17-38

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-9236\(00\)00117-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-9236(00)00117-2)

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### Abstract

Organizational decisions of the future may include social, environmental, and economic concerns, and be much more "wicked" [Policy Sciences, 4 (1973) 155], complex and interconnected than those of the past. Organizations and their decision support systems must embrace procedures that can deal with this complexity and go beyond the technical orientation of previous DSS. Singerian inquiring organizations [Australian Journal of Information Systems, 6 (1) (1998) 3; <http://www.cba.uh.edu/~parks/fis/fis.htm> (1998); Proceedings of 3rd Americas Conference on Information Systems, Indianapolis, August 1997, p. 293; Proceedings of the 1999 Meeting of the America's Conference on Information Systems, Milwaukee, August 1999; Special Issue of Information Systems Frontiers on Philosophical Reasoning in Information Systems Research (in press)], based on Churchman's [The Design of Inquiring Systems: Basic Concepts of Systems and

Organization, Basic Books, New York, NY, 1971] inquiring systems and Mitroff and Linstone's [The Unbounded Mind: Breaking the Chains of Traditional Business Thinking, Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1993] unbounded systems thinking (UST), are designed to deal with wicked decision situations. This paper discusses DSS and knowledge management in Singerian organizations and calls for a new decision-making paradigm for DSS.



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## Keywords

Decision support systems; Knowledge management; Inquiring systems; Inquiring organizations; Wicked decisions

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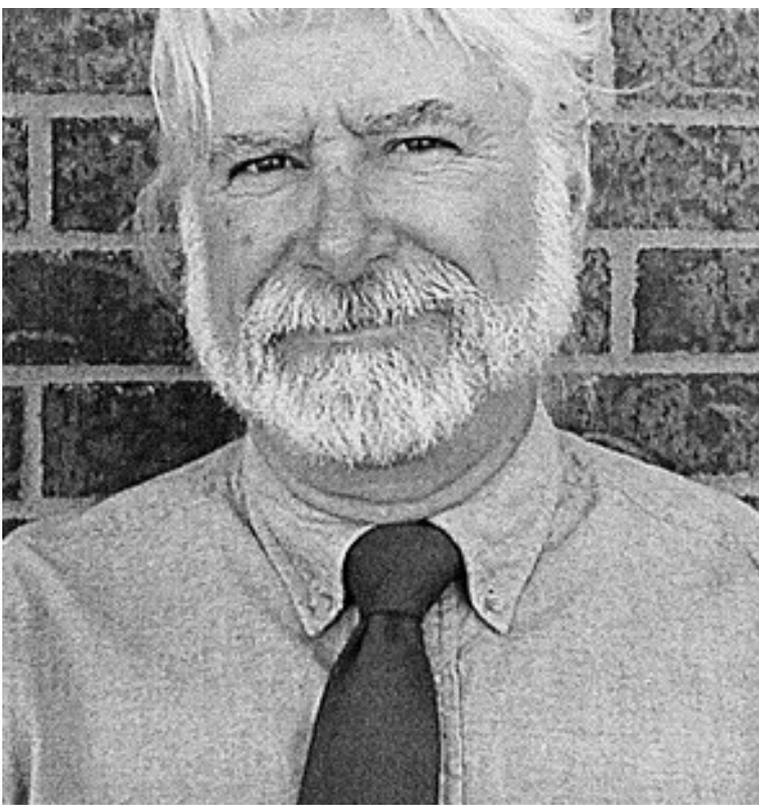
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**Jim F. Courtney** is Professor of Management Information Systems Department at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. He formerly was Tenneco Professor of Business Administration in the Information and Operations Management Department at Texas A&M University. He received his PhD in Business Administration (Management Science) from the University of Texas at Austin in 1974. His academic experience also includes faculty positions at Georgia Tech, Texas Tech, Lincoln University in New Zealand and the State University of New York at Buffalo. Other experience includes positions as Database Analyst at MRI Systems Corporation and Visiting Research Scientist at the NASA Johnson Space Center. His papers have appeared in several journals, including *Management Science*, *MIS Quarterly*, *Communications of the ACM*, *IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man and Cybernetics*, *Decision Sciences*, *Decision Support Systems*, *the Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Database*, *Interfaces*, *the Journal of Applied Systems Analysis*, and *the Journal of Experiential Learning and Simulation*. He is the co-developer of the Systems Laboratory for Information Management (Business Publications, 1981), a software package to support research and education in decision support systems, co-author of *Database Systems for Management* (Second Edition, Irwin Publishing Company, 1992), and *Decision Support Models and Expert Systems* (MacMillan Publishing, 1992). He is currently a member of the Governing Council of the Knowledge Management Consortium Institute. His present research interests are knowledge-based decision support systems, knowledge management, inquiring (learning) organizations and sustainable economic systems.

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