

Managing Complexity by Modelling Dependencies

Proceedings of the 12th International DSM Conference Cambridge, UK, 22-23 July 2010







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David C. Wynn Matthias Kreimeyer Katharina Eben Maik Maurer Udo Lindemann John Clarkson (eds.)

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FOREWORD

The world is growing ever more complex and interconnected. Increasing levels of dependency are making complex systems – such as products, processes and organisations – more difficult to understand, design, optimise and operate. Increases in connectivity are also making some systems more susceptible to uncertainty and change. In many domains and industries there is thus a pressing need to improve the capacity of complex systems to deliver desired levels of performance in terms of time, cost, quality, operational efficiency and many other criteria; and to make these systems robust to uncertainties as well as more flexible to respond to emerging opportunities. Satisfying these many requirements requires systems with appropriate levels of complexity, and therefore necessitates tools and techniques for delivering and managing that complexity.

Dependency and Structure Modelling (DSM) techniques support the management of complexity by focusing attention on the elements of a complex system and the dependencies through which those elements are related. By highlighting the dependency structures in systems and their environments, and by helping to understand the implications of connectivity on different aspects of system performance, the DSM perspective can assist in understanding, designing, optimising and maintaining complex systems; including products, processes and organisations.

This volume contains 33 peer-reviewed papers describing the state-of-the-art in DSM research and applications. The papers were presented at the 12th International DSM Conference held in Cambridge, UK in July 2010. They advance DSM thinking and practice in many areas: risk and decisions; planning; iteration management; products and architectures; requirements, reviews and change management; developments in DSM and MDM theory; DSM in construction; and industry applications.

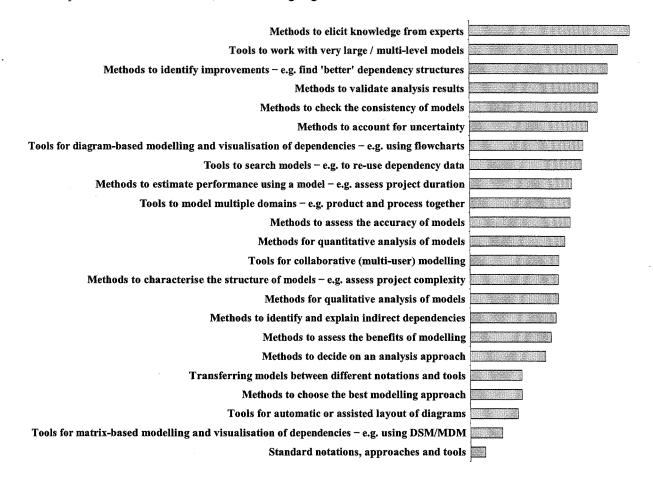
Regular attendees of the DSM conference series will have noticed that a number of changes to the format have been introduced in 2010. The first is a change in name; although the conference has always been known as *The International DSM Conference*, this year the acronym abbreviates *Dependency and Structure Modelling* rather than *Design Structure Matrix*. This change reflects a gradual shift in emphasis of papers presented at the conference series. In recent years, the initial focus on design structure matrix-based modelling techniques has expanded and papers have encompassed a broader range of modelling and visualisation approaches, including multiple domain matrices, force-directed layouts, and other tools for the representation, visualisation and analysis of dependency structures. Nevertheless, the focus of the conference, and of the papers in this volume, remains on modelling the connections between elements in a system – and on exploring how an understanding of structural dependencies can support the management of complexity by assisting system analysis, design and optimisation.

The second change in format has been the increase in length of the papers. In previous years, papers were limited to three pages in length. This year, an allocation of six pages has allowed authors to expand upon their ideas, approaches and tools in greater detail. This was supported by a review process in which most contributions were peer-reviewed by at least two members of the scientific committee and by at least one other peer-reviewer drawn from the pool of authors.

One of the special features of the DSM conference series has always been a strong emphasis on the exchange of views and ideas between researchers and practitioners. This is reflected in the present volume by a number of papers with industry authors or co-authors, and by the contributions of industry practitioners to the scientific, organising and review committees. With this focus in mind, as part of the conference preparations we undertook to identify DSM research trends and future topics which could enhance the applicability of modelling techniques in practice. Academics and industrialists who had participated in real-life dependency modelling projects were therefore asked to participate in a survey, including all registrants for the DSM 2010 conference. At the time of writing, 37 respondents from 10 countries have completed the survey. Each respondent described in detail their experience of at least one dependency modelling project. These modelling projects used a wide range

of approaches, notations and tools and were undertaken in many different industries. The models were reported to vary in size, comprising just over 195 elements on average (to calculate this average, we first removed one 'outlier' describing a model with 1,000,000 elements). Most respondents were academics in the modelling/DSM community with a background in industry, or industrialists with a background in modelling/DSM research.

Two of the questions in this survey listed a number of topics related to dependency and structure modelling and asked: *How important is it to improve this aspect of dependency modelling?* Respondents were able to indicate their answers on a scale of 1-10 in each case. The average response to this question is shown below, scaled to highlight the trend between minimum and maximum values.



Our interpretation of these results is that topics such as standard notations, DSM tool support and the identification and explanation of indirect dependencies are now considered relatively mature by the respondents. The results suggest that some of the most pressing issues facing dependency modellers in practice surround population and validation of models: how to elicit knowledge from experts; how to deal with very large and multi-level models; how to account for uncertainty; and how to validate analysis results. The community seems to agree that these are hot topics for future research!

We are very pleased to welcome you to the 12th International DSM Conference.

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