

BEYOND THE INFORMATION AGE AND INTO THE NEW DECISION AGE



Beyond the Information Age was the theme of the MCDM 2019 meeting in Istanbul this past June. What does the theme mean? A quick consultation with Dr. Ilker Topcu, conference chairman, revealed that the theme came from a discussion among the organizers of the conference about what is next after the information age. In effect, we live in an age characterized by a shift from industrial production to information processing. Still, any age in human history is expected to come to an end and be replaced by another one. So, the question: “What comes next?” is perfectly valid.

While the MCDM organizers did not reach an agreement on what is next, the fact that they chose *Beyond the Information Age* as a theme for the most important conference on decision-making is quite telling. I think the message is that now that we have large amounts of information and easy communication available, the so-called information and communication technology (ICT), the next step is to be able to use this capability for effective decision-making. We are still far from this as shown by the passionate, but many times low-level public discourse about problems such as climate change, migrations, pandemics and others.

Based on this, I propose that the next age should be called the *Decision Age*, which could be defined as an age in which our current ICT capabilities are used to make effective decisions at all levels. This is the implicit message of the MCDM choice of theme this year. We are far from this kind of routinely effective decision-making. In our information age, too much information may lead to excessive analysis, information overload, lack of strategic focus and illusory knowledge (quickly accessed information that may mislead us into thinking we now know about the topic when in reality we have just scratched the surface). Finally, decision-making analysis is still practiced mainly by specialists who many times lack the power or ability to convince the actual decision-makers to take the best course of action.

Therefore, we celebrate the choice of the theme *Beyond the Information Age* for MCDM2019 and *IJAHP* welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the upcoming *Decision Age* with the publication of our second issue this year. Beginning in our next issue, selected peer-reviewed AHP/ANP articles submitted from MCDM2019 will be published.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Enrique Mu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Enrique Mu, PhD
IJAHP Editor-in-Chief