

Maintenance, replacement and reliability : editorial

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Editorial

Maintenance, replacement and reliability

A particular aim of this special issue is to publish papers presented at IFORS 2002 in the Maintenance, Replacement and Reliability stream organized by the guest editors. Authors travelled from all over the world to participate in this flagship international OR conference. A strong North American presence was obtained through the US–UK collaboration that formed the basis of the guest editorship for this special issue—Joe Hartman himself looked after North American papers submitted to the special issue, while Martin Newby and Philip Scarf handled papers submitted by those authors resident elsewhere. Many colleagues assisted with the refereeing of papers, and we are very grateful to them. We would also like to thank Oxford University Press, and Tony Christer for his continuing support and advice.

A large response from prospective authors means that we have more papers than can be accommodated in a single issue, and papers accepted subsequent to the publication of this issue will appear in the near future as a part-special issue of the journal—we anticipate that this part-special issue will be published at the end of this year.

Interest in maintenance, replacement and reliability remains strong, both within industry and among academics. A recent workshop held under the auspices of the *International Foundation for Research in Maintenance* and the *Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council* on ‘The Perspective of Maintenance in Industry in the UK’ indicated that there are many common issues in maintenance, replacement and reliability in industry in spite of the fact that the context of industrial organizations varies greatly. Researchers can have a significant role to play in bringing new modelling breakthroughs of the sort published in this issue to bear on operational and strategic issues within industry, even though academics and industrialists have different objectives. The lack of time for reflection in industry means that there are opportunities for those whose *raison d’être* is the generation of ideas and careful reflection on these ideas to develop and offer modelling support. It is important, however, that industry is made aware of the availability of ‘solutions’ and the appropriateness of ‘solutions’ through, for example: the use and creation of venues and networks for knowledge transfer; the delivery of short courses and workshops using modern technologies; the development of software as a platform for a joint community; post-graduate research projects; and the publication of case studies that are accessible to the industrial community. It is important that academics strike a balance between the publication of new models and methodology and putting these ideas into practice. This issue addresses publication. Good luck with implementation.

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