
Special holiday issue - the seasonal deckchair read

This is one of our light hearted presentations - it has been our tradition to break the research and development work with two less serious issues in August and December. However, as this is the second *NEWSLETTER* of our advanced phase of creating knowledge in our specialist area, I make no apology for having to allocate space to technical matters as there is so much to get through.

A very warm welcome is extended to our new readers in China. This has come about thanks to the enthusiasm of Jeremy Kidner of the Hong Kong Regional Interest Group, who has offered to circulate these *NEWSLETTERS* to the members. Thanks, Jeremy and perhaps symbolic that you are joining us at the time of the Olympics in Beijing - certainly easy to remember in the future.

Features, this month:

1 of 3 - The Book Review

In 2006 the book review was *Bugatti Queen* and for 2007, *Polar Shift*. This year, by way of a change

Appendix 1 attached

2 of 3 - The "Forum" Wednesday 17th September - and the future

The SIG's workshop, "Snap, crackle and pop", is on the last day of the Forum in the afternoon Learning Zone . . .

Appendix 2 attached

3 of 3 - Heuristics

My dictionary defines Heuristics as "enabling someone to discover or learn something for themselves". On reference to my search engine

Appendix 3 attached

And now for something different:

Your editor is otherwise involved with an institution in Nottingham who own a Grade Two Star listed building in the

Appendix 4 attached

Next issue will be out in September - *NEWSLETTER No 30*. See you all then

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Appendices

1 of 3 - The Book Review

In 2006 the book review was *Bugatti Queen* and for 2007, *Polar Shift*. This year, by way of a change I was going to write a 2000 word story of fiction suitable for Risk Managers, with excitement and humour included as tributes to *James Bond* and *Wallis and Gromit* respectively. Then I thought it would be an inappropriate use of **irm** Webspaces at the present time. However, had I have written the story, it would have started like this:

Somewhere in northern England, two thick set men in a white Mercedes van travelled up the motorway. The vehicle had tinted side windows and would remind the casual onlooker of a mortuary ambulance - it held station in the outside lane, the driver's face was pensive behind dark shades as a landscape of summer green rushed past. Someway back, a high powered motorcycle maintained a steady and safe distance apart from the traffic, the rider did not want to attract undue attention . . .

2 of 3 - The "Forum"

The SIG's workshop, "Snap, crackle and pop", is on the last day of the Forum in the afternoon Learning Zone. Pauline Bird MIRM will lead our dedicated team in addressing some of the problems of people, stress and risk. We offer no *free gifts* for attending, but plenty of useful material for that report to the boss on what benefit was gained from attendance. A summary of the event will follow later in the year.

and the future - well, this is the preliminary announcement that the **irm** have now given formal approval for the preparation of the "Handbook on People, Communication and Behaviour risks". This work will be ongoing over the Winter and whilst the preparation will be by the dedicated team, any member is welcome to make a contribution - so drop me a line if you have anything you think ought to be included.

Interlude 1

In a parallel universe, one where I had written the work of fiction, readers would by now have seen that the men in the Mercedes, who were from an uncertain background, had arrived in a northern seaside resort. They carried a briefcase containing a million US dollars in used notes to a scheduled rendezvous in a derelict former faith building which was constructed of stone under a lead flashed slate roof. Unbeknown to the men, a scruffy looking character was pushing on old wheelie bin up a nearby alleyway

Meanwhile, some little distance away, your editor was sitting in a deckchair on the beach. At his side, a large but docile mastiff dog lay dozing in the warm sunlight, whiskers twitching in the gentle breeze - to the other side, a second deckchair was vacant. In a car park next to the beach, a small covered trailer had been dropped off earlier in the morning

3 of 3 - Heuristics

My dictionary defines Heuristics as "enabling someone to discover or learn something for themselves". On reference to my search engine I find such terminology

as: rules of thumb, educated guesses; intuitive judgements; common sense and I would like to add one from person experience – “gut feeling”.

All of us have the gift to know when something is wrong, but in this world of compliance and regulation it is all too often not possible to go with natural instincts. This brings me to what my research has indicated about the weaknesses and pitfalls of Heuristics – basically this is down to “data available is not up to date and instinct is wrongly influenced”. So we are back to where we started: *Communication and then the comments in NEWSLETTER No 5 (May 2006) about Raw Data and Information*. More will follow over the Winter months. Changing tack now, Heuristics means different things to people in different professions, but that is something for our research ahead – and, there is no separate definition for Risk Management – yet!

Interlude 2

A young man, who readers had already been shown was a grudge bearing employee of the local munitions factory, carefully wheeled a heavy wooden crate into the former faith building – this was to be the perfect crime, he had planted a high explosive booby-trap that he could detonate on exit whilst the men were still loading the Mercedes, hence destroying all evidence of the meeting and the missing goods. The detonator cable had been carefully concealed from view by routing it up over the roof, laying it along the lead flashing so that it would blend in and not be visible to any Police helicopter that may have been in the area – indeed, the perfect crime. On the other side of the building, the scruffy character with the wheelie bin, who was looking for lead to sell to a local scap merchant, started to ascend the external iron stairway

Back at the beach, the high powered motorcycle stopped next to the covered trailer. The rider removed a full face crash helmet with tinted visor revealing long shining hair that cascaded down as she then removed the boots and leathers and placed them neatly in the trailer – the tall young woman, clad now in a tennis dress, made her way towards the beach

And now for something different (*Appendix 4*)

Your editor is otherwise involved with an institution in Nottingham, who own a Grade Two Star listed building in the centre of the city. The former, mainly Georgian, town house is occupied as a private library. Adjacent, there is a large through site on which is constructed the former Odeon Cinema (now long disused and a *Grade 1 listed eyesore*). A recent application to over-develop the site had to be withdrawn amidst great local fury. However, a more sensible proposition is now before the Planners and, following a public meeting, your editor was one of many members of the library asked to send a letter to the Council with my views.

Having drafted the letter from the data, including my own notes from the public meeting, available to me, there were a number of points to raise, including the use of some red tinted panels by the architect which had been described at the public meeting by the local Civil Society representative as *garish*. Consequently, I thought that I had better go and do a survey of the locale and take some photographs. This may appear rather a strange course of action, as I have walked around the area

hundreds of times throughout life – but never in the context of sending a factual letter to the local council.

After completing my photos, I noted that some of the existing buildings had red panels or bands around the top and the inclusion by the architect was merely to blend in with a common theme. In spite of my familiarity with the locale, I had never noticed the splashes of red before.

Comment

Just goes to show how important surveys can be, especially with the preset context. However, surveys take time and cost money, so it is important that as much information is put to the surveyor beforehand for the “context” to be as finely tuned as possible. This, I would argue is another use for the Delphi process discussed in the last issue, so the surveyor is armed with many views (as I was from the Library themselves and the Public Meeting). This leads me neatly to the editorial conclusion that follows shortly

Finale

The young lady in the tennis dress walked gracefully along the beach, the warm sand pressing up between her long toes. The mastiff rose and wagged his tail as she sat down in the deckchair next to your editor just as a massive explosion rocked the locality – US dollars raining down from the sky. Gathering up the money, they quickly made their way back to the car park and, after some debate, rushed the money round to the local police station and handed it in, before riding off into the sunset.

Editorial conclusion on this month's features

Raw data may be misleading and meetings, like those surveys, involve travel and time, so are expensive, not to mention the *environmental footprint* created by the journeys to and fro. Training in heuristics may help with the quality of the data that people generate and hence the integrity of the exchanges in the Delphi process to support decision making. Mark Swabey's second article on this subject with regard to “strengths and weaknesses of each approach” will follow in an early issue.

Postscript

No dog was hurt nor abandoned in the writing of this story – the covered trailer housed a classic *Watsonian* sidecar and mastiff sized crash helmet and goggles. In the great tradition of storytelling, your editor's faithful friend, his master and the new found lady companion, who readers had discovered was on a special assignment for loss adjusters, all lived happily ever after.

Those who have met the editor, will know he bears far more resemblance to *Wallis* than to *Bond* – sadly. As for the risk assessment on the former faith building, not to mention the people risk assessment at the munitions factory – well in the real world, that's what we're all here for, so the story could never have happened – or could it?

Over the winter months, we will have a look at Human Resource perceptions of subjective risk arising from employees – yet another project for our shopping basket.