

# IMA Journal of Management Mathematics (IMAMAN)

Imagine that the IMA is starting from scratch to create a new set of journals for the applied mathematics community. They might propose three broad categories to cover their interests:

- mathematics for understanding things (science)
- mathematics for making things (engineering)
- mathematics for managing things (management)

These categories are collectively covered by the eight IMA journals, with the last one being the IMA Journal of Management Mathematics (IMAMAN).

Perhaps its first editors, Ray and Roy, had this trichotomy – science, engineering, management – in mind when the journal was launched in 1986. We cannot know for sure, but it is an interesting idea. What we do know is that Ray Cuninghame-Green was Professor of Industrial Mathematics at the University of Birmingham and Roy Stainton was Professor of Operational Research at the University of Southampton. Ray was a pioneer of max-algebra (today also known as tropical mathematics) and Roy served as a president of the UK Operational Research Society (ORS). Clearly, these guys were not as famous as other similar, contemporary partnerships, viz. Simon and Garfunkel, French and Saunders, but they took the bold step to back this beautiful journal.

The name of the journal has changed a few times, in existential angst, first ‘mathematics in management’, then ‘mathematics in business and industry’, and now ‘management mathematics’. Nonetheless, the hallmark and mission of the journal remain unchanged.

**Our hallmark:** the central position of mathematical modelling and analysis and the equal valuation of theory and practice.

**Our mission:** to publish mathematical research that can be directly used or has demonstrable potential to be used in the management of profit, not-for-profit, and governmental/public organisations.

So, what does management mathematics (mathematics for managing things) include exactly? Defining it is perhaps unnecessary. Instead, let the community decide what is in or out. Further, a definition may exclude something innovative (that we haven’t thought of yet). We think it is better to leave it open to interpretation and instead to describe something that is ‘management’ with ‘mathematics in it’.

Take *last-mile logistics*, for example, a contemporary transportation management problem that can benefit from mathematical modelling and analysis to facilitate better decision making. Or, you may want to consider the case of maths in sports. We do not publish sports science or sports engineering work, which is stuff left for other journals, rather we focus on maths for sports management. This reinforces the ‘understanding, making and managing’ classification described at the beginning of this article.

The latest two special issues of the journal are devoted to sports (issue 4, 2021) and last mile logistics (issue 4, 2022). The Editor-in-Chief also interviewed the guest special issue editors for videocasts that are available on YouTube at: [tinyurl.com/IMAMAN2021](https://tinyurl.com/IMAMAN2021) and [tinyurl.com/IMAMAN2022](https://tinyurl.com/IMAMAN2022). These videos are an interesting and informative introduction to the journal.

*Management Mathematics* is about using mathematics to study problems that arise in management. We cannot solve management problems with mathematics, because only mathematical problems can be solved with mathematics. Similarly, we cannot seek optimal solutions to management problems because optimisation is a concept that exists only in the mathematical world. Nonetheless, we can study management problems, or rather any process that arises within management, with the use of mathematics, and prescribe appropriate interventions to reach goals, including improving safety, efficiency and/or value.

It is this use of mathematics that renders Management Mathematics arguably both wider and narrower than Operational Research (OR) and Management Science (MS). There are topic areas within Management Mathematics that are uncharacteristic of OR and MS, but our scope is also narrower because the methodological repertoire of OR and MS allows for the non-mathematical treatment of a problem.

For anyone interested in the journal, please skim through the content online at [academic.oup.com/imaman/](https://academic.oup.com/imaman/). We publish only four issues per year, and no more than 30 papers (and we plan to keep it that way). I also recommend a *retrospective* the editors wrote a few years back on the history of the journal, the distinguished people that have served on its board, and the influence it has had over the years in advancing knowledge and impacting real world practices.

The journal currently is thriving, and we are in the midst of introducing new and exciting initiatives, including: virtual issues, to make it easier for specialist communities to engage with us; the introduction of videocasts to complement all our special issues; the re-organisation of the editorial board towards better gender and geographical distribution; the association of the journal with the biennial joint IMA/ORS conference (see page 103); the introduction of a strategic advisory board to provide input into the development and strategic direction of the journal; the organisation of the journal around *areas*, and the assignment of Area Editors; and the constant amendment of our Scholar One system to offer an excellent service to authors, reviewers and editors.

We are currently strengthening our social media presence. Ali Emrouznejad (University of Surrey) is looking after that, so if you have any suggestions, please contact him. You can follow our journal on LinkedIn and @IMA\_Journal on Twitter.

We wish to see IMAMAN positioned within the top tier of publications on the interface between mathematics and management. Please see our journal online at: [academic.oup.com/imaman/](https://academic.oup.com/imaman/). We hope our articles will inform your research and influence your practices.

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