

## New challenges for OR practice in the age of AI and Big Data

The speaker, John Hopes, is the current President of the UK Operational Research Society which last year held its 60<sup>th</sup> annual conference. The diversity of that conference's programme, together with that of the OR Society's publications, training courses and other activities reflects 60 years of expansion and development in the field of OR. But the world is changing rapidly and OR needs to adapt accordingly.

In an era of 'fake news' it has never been more important to base decisions on sound evidence from high quality modelling and analytics. Also, with the rapid growth in computer power and the explosion in available data, the ability to provide such decision support has never been greater. Indeed, the UK and other Governments have recognised that it is essential for future productivity and competitiveness. In addition, the importance of AI and Big Data is generally acknowledged along with the need to address an ongoing shortage of skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

OR practice has a key role to play in all of this, being central to the application of effective modelling and analytics. The challenges for OR are to ensure that this key role is recognised, to keep OR in the vanguard of research and innovation flowing from technology-driven change, to differentiate itself through the techniques it has brought to the world over the past 60+ years, to demonstrate the value of the OR approach in the world of AI and Big Data, and to play a full part in meeting the skills needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This talk will draw on John's 40 years' experience of OR practice, both in industry and management consulting. It will consider the rapidly changing environment that OR operates in, look at its recent successes and growth, and explore how OR can raise its profile and take its rightful place at the heart of the age of AI and Big Data.