



1st World Congress on Decision Tables (WCDT 2010)

Part of the Business Rules Forum, at the Building Business Capability event
Thursday Oct 21, 2010 - Washington DC

The 1st World Congress tried to bundle the best of the available expertise and set out some future directions for decision tables.

Decision tables have a long history and are so natural that they keep being reinvented. Their strengths are increasingly relevant: the ability to deal with complexity and their appeal to a business audience to increase business capability.

Whether it is about the outline of a set of business rules, or the consistent specification of decisions for a business process model, (good) decision tables have proven a valuable business-friendly notation that guarantees conciseness, completeness, correctness and consistency.

Joint Business Analysis Forum & Business Rules Forum Sessions

Decision Table Anatomy: From clear tables to advanced decision structures

Jan Vanthienen, Professor in Business Information Systems, K.U. Leuven

This presentation gave an overview of decision table notations and best practices for tabular representations. Good decision tables and decision table structures were introduced.

- Some background: kinds of tables, table hierarchies, factoring and normalization, semantics, optimizations
- Verification and validation in and between tables
- Real examples from business and government
- Business capability by business people in real business situation

http://www.econ.kuleuven.be/tew/academic/infosys/members/VTHIENEN/download/Papers/br_dt.pdf

<http://www.econ.kuleuven.be/prologa/download/overview82-2000.pdf>

Decision Analysis and Decision Tables

Ronald G. Ross, Co-Founder & Principal, Business Rule Solutions, LLC and Executive Editor, Business Rules Journal

This presentation discussed what every professional needs to know about undertaking decision analysis effectively. Decision analysis involves identifying and analyzing key decisions in day-to-day business operations and capturing the decision logic used to support them. The end-product is decision logic in the form of decision structures, decision tables, and business rule statements.

The presentation explained Question Charts (Q-ChartsTM), a simple diagramming technique for capturing the structure of decisions. It illustrated how to analyze and define the key elements of each decision and related dependencies. These innovative techniques have proven highly successful in organizations of many different types and sizes.

Read all about it in the new (free) [White Paper "Decision Analysis Using Decision Tables and Business Rules"](#)

Decision Tables and Process Variability

Maria Teresa Baldassarre, Assistant Professor, University of Bari

The presentation discussed the use of decision tables for formalizing business decisions: managing large quality models; interpreting results based on data collected from Statistical Process Control (SPC) indicators; making a diagnosis in medical contexts based on the indicators of insulin in patients; identifying the best solution that fits the requirements of a product in a product-line, etc.

Nicola Boffoli, *Research Fellow, SERLAB*

Business processes reflect specific conditions and condition values that may be true at a certain moment. Process conditions may change determining the need to change the values assigned to the conditions, as well as actions or decision rules. This part of the presentation highlighted how the use of decision tables allows for quick and painless changes that can be carried out by anyone without being tied to the “person” assuring correctness, completeness. An example showed how different companies using a similar decision structure achieved different decisions after a certain period, due to the different business needs that arise over time.

Real life case: Gathering and Validating Requirements in Hours, Not Weeks

JP O'Connor, Senior Product Manager, Otis Educational Systems, Inc.

Use of decision tables is a powerful technique in capturing, validating, and communicating complex rules in a manner accessible to all. Decision tables are much more effective in this role than traditional flow charts and other techniques. In many cases their use results in the solution of otherwise "unsolvable" problems. A typical business use case was explored, illustrating the nature of the problem, how the use of decision tables enabled the problem to be solved, how the tables served as the bridge to the technical aspects of the project, and the profound impact the decision tables work had on the overall project and the implementation cost and schedule.

Q & A session: Past, Present and Future of Decision Tables: notation, standards, tools

Jan Vanthienen, Professor in Business Information Systems, K.U. Leuven

Ronald G. Ross, Co-Founder & Principal, Business Rule Solutions, LLC and Executive Editor, Business Rules Journal

Silvie Spreeuwenberg, Founder & Director, LibRT

Paul Vincent, CTO, Business Rules and CEP, TIBCO

Interesting discussions about the need for courses and standards. Check out DMN (the Decision Modelling Notation), currently starting up as an OMG initiative, which will include decision tables and table structures. <http://tibcoblogs.com/cep/2010/03/25/standardising-decision-models-for-fun-and-profit/>



Decision table roundtable