

Letter from the Editors

By Mark Africa and Sean Hayward

Welcome fellow members of the Society of Actuaries Technology Section to the second edition of *CompAct* in 2017. The feedback we received on the switch to a paper issue was positive across the board, and we received a lot of strong feedback on the quality of our articles in the last issue. The one area where some members did provide some constructive feedback was around the number of articles, to which we as editors say, we fully agree! We would love more articles, both because it helps educate our section members, and selfishly because as editors, we both love reading and hearing different ideas and perspectives from our talented section members. So, while we definitely hear and understand the feedback for more articles, we need to turn that request back to you, our readers. We encourage you to take a bit of time and put together an article, and if you have interest in writing, but need help with a topic, or to flesh out an idea, myself, Mark or any of the other technology section council members are always happy to help, just ask!

With respect to article submissions, there are two initiatives that we'd like to draw attention to. First, is the SOA volunteer database. This is a place where all SOA members can go to look for areas where they can volunteer to help the profession, and one key area of recruitment on that site is for newsletter authors. More information on this can be found under the volunteer section at engage.soa.org.

More specific to the technology section, there is an active call for essays that Paul Ramirez will discuss in more detail in his letter from the chair.

As always, Mark and I welcome feedback on *CompAct* from all of our members, both related to content as well as the changes to our delivery mechanism and timing. We encourage any of you to reach out to either of us with ideas for potential articles, or if you have an interest in authoring an article. We can be reached at mark.africa@aig.com or sean.hayward@fisglobal.com.

In this latest issue of *CompAct*, in addition to Paul's letter from the chair, we have four articles. One is a continuation of a recurring series, and we have three new contributors.

THE WHAT OF DATA VISUALIZATION

One of our most dedicated authors, Mary Pat Campbell, continues her series on data visualization with an insightful discussion on the software available to help with data visualization. She covers a number of different categories of tools, with discussion around some of the benefits of each category of software.

ACTUARIAL SYSTEMS ON THE PUBLIC CLOUD

Focusing on a quickly expanding area of interest for actuaries, new contributor Yash Titus of FIS has written a useful article on the applicability and considerations for making use of the public cloud for your actuarial modeling needs.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF STOCHASTIC RESULTS

Continuing with the data visualization theme, John Hegstrom from ARC covers one of the more challenging topics in actuarial modeling these days, understanding and effectively communicating stochastic results in a way that allows meaningful conclusions to be drawn from them. His article covers a wide range of options and considerations for how these results can be handled in a way that allows insightful and independent conclusions to be drawn.

HORSES FOR COURSES

Van Beach from Milliman revisits the age-old debate between open and closed actuarial software platforms, and makes the argument that this discussion isn't nearly as binary as it used to be. Best practice these days is to blend aspects of both paradigms in a way that gives actuaries the flexibility they need, without sacrificing the controls and governance demanded of modern actuarial platforms. ■



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