

From the Editor's Desk...

JSS Technical Editor
C. G. Muniak Ph.D.



Principles

A few people pointed out that there were some events at our recent International System Safety Conference (ISSC) that included some excellent discussions that were not documented with slides or papers. This is often the case with panels and roundtables. There was concern that important principles were discussed and might be lost. It is now my understanding that, at least in one case, there will be an effort to create a paper to provide some documentation.

This got me thinking about the subject of “principles.” A few years ago, I led an effort to develop a “body of knowledge” for the ISSS. The effort was paused, but there were some conclusions. Perhaps the most important conclusion was that the ISSS needed a set of system safety principles that were domain-independent and broadly applicable. It was thought that the material previously developed by the ISSS, on the subject of principles, tends to be too specific, fragmented and not of general use. A distillation and blending of old *Journal of System Safety* papers and Conference proceedings could produce an “aqua vitae” that might infuse life into some of the ISSS activities such as the “initiatives.”

The first technical paper in this issue, “COVID-19,” is by Dr. Richard Zito. This paper is wide-ranging and discusses many aspects of the biology of the virus, as well as methods to control — and perhaps defeat — this disease. Dr. Zito discusses false positives and false nega-

tives, along with Bayes' Theorem. This is something that should probably play a larger role in the practice of system safety than it now does.

The second technical paper, “Virtual Button and Graphical Interface System Safety Evaluation using System Theoretic Process Analysis (STPA),” is by Jesse Johnston and Mark A. Vernacchia. The paper shows how STPA can include drivers and operators as system elements within the control structure, where these humans are expected to interact with a “system/feature of interest” by means of virtual buttons presented in a graphical interface.

The third technical paper, “Tips and Lessons Learned for Conducting Safety Review Board Meetings,” by Robert E. Smith, describes how to prepare for safety reviews for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). Much of the associated process described could be useful to non-DoD entities, as well.

The “TBD” column by Charlie Hoes discusses some thoughts on the ISSC and other ISSS matters.

The “System Safety in Healthcare” column by Dev Raheja and Dr. Maria D. Escano discusses some aspects of good and bad practices in healthcare.

As usual, I welcome your comments, letters to the editor and article submissions.

Regards
Chuck

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Please send summaries or abstracts to Chuck Muniak, Technical Editor, at journal@system-safety.org.