

: *What are characteristics of the computerized decision support domain?*

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Decision support and decision support systems are varied. Seven characteristics can help described both appropriate decision support situations and those situations where decision automation or special computerized studies might be more appropriate. The seven characteristics defining the appropriate domain to build and provide decision support and DSS are 1) access to data, 2) decision criteria and goals, 3) structured, 4) frequency, 5) context, 6) uniqueness, and 7) decision strategy. The goal is to identify and define the domain of both situations where application development is occurring and ones that require further investigation.

Each characteristic is described on a continuum:

1) **access to relevant data** --> easy access |----versus-----| challenging and difficult access

2) **decision criteria and goals** --> well defined and well understood |----versus-----| poorly defined and poorly understood

3) **structure** --> highly structured and programable |----versus-----| poorly structured and requiring creativity and intuition

4) **frequency** --> recurrent and routine |----versus-----| discrete and novel

5) **context** --> stable and predictable |----versus-----| volatile and uncertain

6) **uniqueness** --> commonplace and ordinary |----versus-----| atypical and uncommon

7) **decision strategy** --> emphasizes routinely planning in advance with pre-made decisions |----versus-----| an emphasis primarily on ad hoc planning and action taking

The plausible computerized decision support domain includes all those decision situations where 3 or more characteristics are assessed on the left side of the appropriate scale midpoint.

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