26th International Conference on Software Engineering

May 23—28, Edinburgh International Conference Centre, Scotland, UK

Disarming "weapons of mass construction"!

Peace to every scientist, engineer, and academic on this globe! This is a call to unite in response to the so-called "IEEE Embargo", affecting four OFAC trade-embargoed countries: Cuba, Libya, Sudan, and Iran.

The controversy began in August 2001, when an American bank rejected a cheque the IEEE had written to pay for a meeting room in Tehran. Examining the trade embargo with OFAC officials, IEEE lawyers decided that most services it provided to members in the four embargoed countries were most likely illegal. In January 2002, the IEEE informed members residing in Cuba, Iran, Libya and Sudan that, because of OFAC regulations, those members would not be able to take advantage of member benefits and services except for print subscriptions to IEEE publications. Even today members of the four countries are prohibited from being ele-

vated to a higher-grade membership, using IEEE e-mail aliases and Web accounts, accessing online job listings, and conducting conferences under the IEEE name, according to the *Spectrum* (12 April '04).

A petition action against the "IEEE Embargo" was launched by professor Michael Gevers of Universite Catholique du Louvain in Belgium, to affirm the belief that no government should restrict the right of scientists, engineers, or academics to exchange ideas and participate in scholarly activities on a global basis. The petition considers that discrimination on the basis of country of residence clearly violates the Code of Ethics of the IEEE. If the IEEE is to retain its international status, the petition adds, then the Board of Directors must, as a matter of urgency, cease discrimination against IEEE members from countries that are embargoed by the US Government, and consider

all possible actions to achieve this goal, including appeals in courts, possible relocation of its headquarters, or any other appropriate means.

With recent political events dividing the world, our dream of a "global scientific village" is becoming ever more distant! A bitter fact, but the truth nevertheless. As a scientific community, we should unite to refute any policy to "disarm" our freedom to exchange global information, knowledge, and education. Let this be a call for peace for the "disarmed" weapons of mass construction!

— *Rami Bahsoon*

Resources

Petition Action Against IEEE Embargo:
http://www.csam.ucl.ac.be/IEEE_Petition.pl

IEEE Position:
http://www.ieee.org/portal/index.jsp?pageID=corp_level1&path=about&file=ofac.xml&xsl=generic.xsl

Inside this issue:

WOW Wants You!

We want your ideas, opinion, and comments. Drop off your submissions at the registration desk, or email them to sridhar.4@osu.edu.

You're a poet and you know it!!

Read about it on the last page!

Weather Forecast

Today:

Sunny

High: 62°F (17°C)

Low: 48°F (9°C)

Sunset: 9:39 PM

Precipitation: 10%

Tomorrow:

Partly Cloudy; PM light rain

High: 60°F (16°C)

Low: 53°F (12°C)

Sunrise: 4:40 AM

Precipitation: 60%

Pictures from the Conference Opening

Technical Program

David Rosenblum introducing ICSE attendees to the Technical Program

"What is particularly noteworthy is that ICSE is increasingly attracting quality submissions from researchers in other disciplines — programming languages, databases and networks."

The Holyrood Palace — the Queen's official residence in Scotland

How was your experience as PC co-chairs?
Our experience was quite enjoyable, but it was also difficult because of the large number of submissions we received this year. The large jump in submissions required a fair amount of improvisation in the way we allocated papers to PC members, so that their reviewing load would not be too onerous during the seven-week review period.

Do you have any comments on the quality of submissions?
The number of submissions to ICSE has been increasing dramatically over the last few years, as has the number of submissions of good quality, although at a slower rate. So this is a glass that will seem half full or half empty, depending on one's disposition. But what is particularly noteworthy is that ICSE is increasingly attracting quality submissions from researchers in other disciplines — programming languages, databases and networks.

What, in your opinion, is the most important new addition to the technical program this year?
As in past years the technical papers form the cornerstone of the program, but the most significant innovation in the technical program this year is our track on Linkages to Other Disciplines. The track features talks by four international experts from disciplines outside of software engineering, each of whom will offer their perspective on challenging problems in their field that could benefit from research in software engineering.

What were the "good points" and the "bad points" during the paper review process this year?
On the positive side, we had an extremely strong and diverse PC this year who provided thorough evaluations of the papers despite a stringent reviewing schedule, and we had 100% attendance at the PC meeting. On the negative side, the trend toward greater numbers of submissions is pushing the ICSE PC process to its limits, in terms of PC size (47 this year), the number papers reviewed by each PC member (roughly 25 this year), and the logistics of the PC meeting (with people sometimes having to shout in order to be heard across the room).

We also had to deal with a surprisingly large number of problematic submissions, including six submissions rejected outright for being significantly over the allowed page limit; two submissions withdrawn by their authors; four submissions rejected with minimal review because they were discovered to be duplicative of previously published material; and one accepted submission subsequently withdrawn from publication because it was also discovered to be duplicative of previously published work. At least four of these problematic submissions were submitted by PhD students without the knowledge or consent of their PhD advisor co-authors. Situations like these end up wasting inordinate amounts of time on the part of the program co-chairs and program committee members involved, they cause irreparable harm to peoples' reputations, and they can create difficult legal problems for the conference organizers. Unfortunately, these problems only seem to be getting worse from year to year, not better.

Are there any special people you would like to acknowledge?
In addition to the PC members, we received invaluable support from Jacky's team in Grenoble in processing the submissions, and from Clare Gryce of UCL and Claire Ewings of IEE in running the PC meeting in London.

And we never could have gotten through this experience without the tireless efforts of Richard van de Stadt, who did an amazing job of managing the Cyber-Chair system we used for electronic submission of papers and reviews.

Finally, the numbers – what are the stats (number of submissions, acceptance rate, etc.)
We received 442 submissions, 6 of which were rejected without review because of excessive length. Of the remaining 436 that were reviewed, 59 were accepted, and one of the accepted papers was subsequently rejected. So the final acceptance rate is 58/436, or 13.3%.

— David Rosenblum and Jacky Estublier

The Dark Side of ICSE: On Exploitation

Bloody hell. I came here to learn something new — and now I find myself writing an article on the eve of the arrival of the Antichrist. The world is a darker place. Nobody and nothing will be spared at this conference. People are turning orange from the effort. Pregnant women are being made to carry heavy loads — see evidence in the picture, — are exposed to stress and confined to small spaces. If you see Ms. G at the reception, give her a thumbs-up and shout "WOW!,"

she will appreciate it. Remember to smile, but do not offer a handshake — bow respectfully and wink.

Enough of this. Let's talk about basic liberty. I was going to write a column about not being served coffee at lunch. What use is the morning piper going to be when I hit my low after three hours of checking my e-mail??

A preliminary investigation by WOW has revealed that far from being about coffee, this issue was a

hornet's nest. The mafia got involved, one of our agents got called a "cheapskate" and beaten up behind the toilet area; the editor was threatened with the withdrawal of wireless access; and our distributors with the issuance of black T-shirts instead of orange. Better to give this one a rest.

Oh, see you at tonight's bout, "Big Blue vs. the 800 pound gorilla"!

— Christian Nentwich

Ms G at work!

Call for Participation – ASE 2004

We kindly invite you to participate in ASE 2004, the 19th IEEE International Conference on Automated Software Engineering, which will take place in Linz, Austria September 20-25, 2004. ASE 2004 brings together researchers and practitioners to share ideas on the foundations, techniques, tools, and applications of auto-

mated software engineering.

ASE 2004 offers technical papers selected from 183 submissions, 3 keynote presentations, tutorials, panel discussions, a doctoral symposium, and social events. ASE also offers several exciting co-located events and workshops. The submission deadline

for workshop papers is June 21. Please visit the conference website at http://ase-conference.org for further information.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Austria in September!

— Paul Grünbacher and Virginie Wiels.

"If you see Ms. G at the reception, give her a thumbs-up and shout "WOW!," she will appreciate it."

Need Distraction?

We all know how terribly important it is to check e-mail every 10 seconds at conferences. Even so, if there's some spare time and bandwidth, why not use it to join orkut (http://www.orkut.com).

This is a network of friends and professionals, with some nifty communities to join on top. A substantial part the software engineering community is already on there. The only catch is, you cannot just join, someone has to invite you. Good luck hunting them down.

Richard Stallman's keynote address on Wednesday was most entertaining

Whisky for Poems!

*There once was a hacker
named Dick
Who had a peculiar tic
As soon as he'd hear
A piper was near
He'd hit the deck and get sick*

Send us your Limerick!!
The bottle of "Chairman's Reserve" whisky is eagerly waiting to be drunk – by you or whoever you choose to give it to. It is easy. Just put five lines down, make sure they follow the metre, and the rest is up to you. This is for fun, glory and a bottle of booze, so please spend a minute – we want lots of entries.

Limericks can be submitted at the registration desk, in the specially prepared baskets. You can also e-mail your entry to srid-har.4@osu.edu. Submit as many as you like!

As is customary in Software Engineering, we have extended the submission deadline for the contest. You have until **noon on Friday** to turn in your limericks!

— WOW

ICSE Polo Shirts

Black polo shirts sporting the famous ICSE 2004 tartan mouse are on sale at the registration desk for £12 each. Get one for yourself or your friends back home! Credit cards accepted.

Things you might want to do...

After a hard days' conferencing why not hotfoot it over to the **St Mark's Church** (Castle Terrace, 0131 668 2019) for a classical performance by the Hebrides Ensemble. If you fancy a bit of Brahm it all kicks off at 6pm. £5, £3 concession.

More hardcore culture can be had thanks to the Queen. HRH has dusted down a bunch of Dutch paintings she found in her basement and put them out for your perusal at the imaginatively named **Queen's Gallery** (Palace of Holyroodhouse, 0131 556 5100). The exhibition includes world-class works by Vermeer, Rembrandt and Terborch. 9am-4:30pm. £4, £3 concession.

Funny things are happening round at the **Cowgate Central Comedy Club** (Hasties Close, Cowgate, 0131 225 9744). An evening of local mirth sure to be worth your hard earned cash/expenses begins at 9pm. £7 entry or £5 con-cession - book ahead.

At the risk of sounding biased, the best club to be at tonight is again the **Liquid Room** (9c Victoria Street, 0131 225 2564) where you will find yourself in the esteemed baseline thumping company of the U-U-U-Utah Saints. A fine way to round off an evening if ever there was one. Now, where did I put my glow-stick?

— Martin Hailey

Win an iPod

Our student volunteers will judge and nominate the best speaker from the technical paper presentation track, and the lucky winner gets to take home an iPod. See page 20 of your program for more details.

The WOW Daily Puzzle

The Camel Race
An Arab sheikh is old and must will his fortune to one of his two sons. He makes a proposition. His two sons will ride their camels in a race, and whichever camel crosses the finish line last will win the fortune for its owner. During the race, the two brothers wander aimlessly for days, neither willing to cross the finish line. In desperation, they ask a wise man for advice. He tells them something; then the brothers leap onto the camels and charge toward the finish line. What did the wise man say?

Solution to Yesterday's Puzzle
If you tried to solve yesterday's "100 prisoners and a lightbulb" puzzle, you probably noticed fairly quickly that it is non-trivial. If you didn't, consider this: how long will your prisoners take to escape, on average. Can they escape before the universe ends? Can they escape before they reach retirement age?

All these profound issues are explored in a very readable paper that you can download from http://math.stanford.edu/~henrys/prisoners.pdf