Conference Participant Report
AH 2002 & ITS 2002

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Overview

I attended two conferences in May and June 2002. The first one was the 2nd International Conference on Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web Based Systems (AH2002), held in Malaga, Spain from 29 – 31 May 2002. The second one was the sixth conference on Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS2002) held in Biarritz, France from 5 – 8 June 2002. ITS2002 presented a forum for research covering various aspects of intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs) whereas AH2002 served as a forum for a wider range of topics.

Looking for additional funds

I needed to get additional funds as the NZD2000 given by the Department of Computer Science was not sufficient to cover all the expenses. I managed to obtain additional funds from the following sources.

1. Tanja's research grant
2. Royal Society of NZ – Canterbury Branch
   {Details are available at : www.canterbury.rsnz.org}
3. IEEE Canterbury Branch {There is a link to the home page under the Related Links of the Electrical Engineering Departments' home page. (www.elec.canterbury.ac.nz)
   It might be advantageous to apply for IEEE membership early.}

Other travel awards are available if you have the NZ permanent residency or citizenship.

1. Royal Society of NZ – Technology Awards
2. Zonta Awards for Women
3. Claude McCarthy Fellowship

The details for the above awards are available from the Scholarships Office.

Key note Speeches

Both conferences had several keynote speakers, one for each day. The keynote speakers from AH2002 were very interesting. I noticed that most of the keynote speakers talked about high level details of their research. Many of them had brief demos.

Discussions with other researchers

I found that different researchers and hence research groups use different terms for the same concept. For example, some researchers use the tem 'scrutable systems' whereas some researchers use 'open user models'. It is very useful to know different terms that are being used to avoid any misunderstanding.

Presentations :

- I noticed that many presenters had their affiliations (the name of the research group, name of the university) in all the slides. I believe that it is a very good idea if you want other researchers remember you, your group or your university.

- Having contact details (specially the email address) at the last slide is good.

- I think it is advantageous if the members of a research group get the opportunity to present more than one paper in the same session, if members gets the opportunity one after another it's better. The research group at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) had three presentations one after the other. We had two presentations one after the other.

- I realized that we do high quality research just like the CMU people even with very limited resources.

- The opportunity to discuss my research at ITS2002 gave me the confidence to present my ideas to a group of researchers

Young Researchers' Track (YRT) Program in ITS 2002

I think it is highly beneficial for research students to present their research in a YRT program. One of the main advantages is the opportunity to obtain feedback from senior researchers in the field. However, it was disappointing to observe that a very few senior researchers attended the YRT program because there were three other parallel sessions were being held.

Summary of the invited talk given by Dr. Peter King at the YRT

I thought this talk was really good. It was also suitable for such a audience.

Seven Challenges for Researchers in ITS

Challenge 1: ITS as a distinct discipline
Identify ITS in such a way that it is distinct from other interactive systems.

Challenge 2: I ^T^S
Does T mean Teaching, Training or Tutoring or all together ?
Do we need to have all components (I, T and S) in an ITS ?

Research within ITS should address an appropriate combination of AI and pedagogy and should be oriented towards the production of running systems.

Challenge 3: Influence on other areas on ITS and influence of ITS on other areas
Research in ITS has been influenced by many fields such as HCI, Education Psychology, AI, Multimedia, Agents etc,

Has the research in ITS influenced any other area?

Challenge 4: Acceptance of ITS
The hallmark of successful research within ITS as with any computer system is user acceptance. Thus users include students, teachers, trainers etc.
Is Turing test still relevant ?
Should we expect the use of ITSs to be transparent ?

Challenge 5: Formalisms of ITSs
Is it possible to use a mathematically based formal system to develop ITSs?

Challenge 6: Prototyping
What are the areas within the design and authoring of an ITS can and should be prototyped?
What are the appropriate development tools, which will enable such prototyping?
How can one proceed from a working prototype to an operational system?

Challenge 7: Group modelling
ITSs should address the notion of user groups. All types of user groups need to be considered, e.g.: authors, administrators

Other Comments

I really enjoyed the architecture, food and other beautiful things in both countries. It seems that the people pay a lot of attention to make everything beautiful even the trivial things like mugs, furniture and so on.

Acknowledgements