The annual IEEE Real-Time Systems Symposium (RTSS) was first initiated in the late 70s. The systems and applications that were studied then were rather expensive, esoteric and perhaps even narrow. Furthermore, one could now argue that the development of these systems was rather ad hoc in nature, and there was a widespread paucity of scientific concepts and engineering methods. Over these past 24 years, in addition to space-based systems and defense systems, real-time systems have experienced tremendous growth and popularity due to the advent of a host of mainstream applications in multimedia, manufacturing, process control, transportation and motion control, robotics, and interactive on-demand applications. RTSS has played a notable role in this transformation by providing a rich forum for the cultivation of a research community focusing on real-time systems and for the dissemination of high-quality results. Specifically, the critical problem of resource management and scheduling has been studied in depth within RTSS, with many results from the community now an integral part of multiple international standards, textbook content in many domains, and several product families in both commercial and defense systems. Furthermore, RTSS and the real-time systems community have also been instrumental in spawning other sister and related research conferences in America, Europe and the Far East. Finally, many prominent conferences in computer science and engineering now have sessions or tracks focusing exclusively on real-time systems.

As technologies, needs and markets change, however, so must research communities and symposia. To spearhead and accelerate such changes, RTSS has also been broadening its focus and scope of interest. The Call for Papers and the Program Committee for RTSS 2003 explicitly solicited and encouraged papers on areas of research falling outside the traditional sphere of interest at RTSS. Furthermore, this year's conference has two special tracks: one on hardware-software co-design for embedded real-time systems, and another on the still-emerging area of sensor networks. A special session also highlights relevant research activities in industry, while another "Demo" session puts the spotlight on functional and useful software systems and tools. We hope that this trend towards diversification will continue. This year, we have also initiated two types of awards to recognize the highest quality work presented at the symposium. The "Best
"Paper Award" among all accepted papers is being awarded as is a "Best Student Paper Award" for a paper with a student as the primary author.

There were 145 papers submitted to this symposium, the second highest number ever submitted to an RTSS. The submission count was high despite a submission policy that restricted Program Committee members from being a co-author on more than one paper. The Program Chair was ineligible to submit any papers at all. At least 3 reviews were obtained per submission, after which the Program Committee met in person. After a day-long discussion, of the 145 submissions, 24 papers were accepted as regular track papers and 5 submissions were accepted as short industry or demo session papers. Moreover, 8 papers were accepted as special track papers by separate committees formed by their respective track-chairs. In addition, work-in-progress submission papers were considered and accepted separately by another committee.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of RTSS 2003. They include Dr. Wayne Wolf, the Chair of the Special Track on Hardware-Software Co-Design; Dr. Adrian Perrig, the Chair of the Special Track on Sensor Networks; Dr. Kevin Jeffay, the Financial Chair; Dr. Tarek Abdelzaher, the Work-In-Progress Session Chair; Dr. Luis Almeida and Dr. Jasleen Kaur, Publicity Chairs; Dr. Pedro Mejia-Alvarez, Local Arrangements Chair; the members of the Program Committee for the symposium; the members of the committees for the Special Tracks and Work-In-Progress Session; and the reviewers. We convey a special note of thanks to Dr. Insup Lee, Chair of the IEEE Technical Committee on Real-Time Systems (TCRTS), and to all the members of the Executive Board of TCRTS.

Finally, we would like to thank all the speakers, session chairs, attendees, as well as all the authors who submitted their work to the symposium. We look forward to your continued vigorous participation in future incarnations of RTSS, and especially your research contributions.

Sanjoy Baruah
General Chair, RTSS 2003

Ragunathan (Raj) Rajkumar
Program Chair, RTSS 2003