Welcome to 1999 IEEE Symposium on Visual Languages (VL’99) in Tokyo, and thank you for participating in the symposium.

In these years we have witnessed visual languages turning from their exciting experimental beginnings into a mature research field. Moreover, in applications, visual languages have become ubiquitous: modern software engineering embraces diagrammatic methods such that visual notations are at the core of almost every specification methodology, visual notations have also been adopted to develop simulation and design environment, complex visual interfaces facilitate end-user applications and iconic communication is tested as an approach to cross-language communication.

The time is now ripe to put theoretical results to practical use and to merge related streams of research. Most importantly, it is the time to strengthen and to enliven the exchange with those research communities who apply visual languages.

VL’99 is a forum for theoreticians, users, designers and developers of visual languages in all fields. To facilitate an efficient and fruitful exchange centered around the core issues in Visual Languages, dedicated tracks were organized which ranged from theory to applications, from special purpose languages to usability issues. We thank B. Meyer, P. Bottoni, Y. Koseki, H. Kolke, M.M. Burnett, M.F. Costabile, A. Schuerr, R. Nakatsu, and S.-K. Chang, who served as track chairs for their special efforts and willingness.

The track organization worked very well. We are very pleased that we received 97 submissions from all over the world and on such a wide variety of VL-related domains. A total of 30 high-quality papers were accepted. In addition, we accepted 17 papers which present the work in progress as poster presentations. Those papers are organized so that we can develop a common language, to exchange ideas, to compare approaches and to experiment with cutting edge technology. To strengthen these goals, S. Levialdi coordinates a panel on “VL Market Place: What Do VL Theories Offer and What Do Applications Require”, and S.-K Chang a panel on “The Future of Visual Languages”. Moreover, B. Meyer and P. Bottoni coordinate a panel on “Visual Languages and Software Engineering”, which is based on the results of a Web discussion forum.

We would like to thank J. J. Pfeiffer for tutorial programs; M. Najork for video proceedings; and general chair, T. Smedley, steering committee members, and program committee members, for their help and advice throughout the conference organization process. Without their collaboration and assistance, we couldn’t have made this all possible. We also would like to thank all of the authors and attendees for helping to make this symposium exciting and successful.

Welcome to VL’99!

Masahito Hirakawa and Piero Mussio
Program Co-Chairs