General Chair Message

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It is our great pleasure to welcome you to Greenville, South Carolina, for the IEEE Conference on Virtual Reality (IEEE VR) 2016. This is the 18th year of the premiere conference in virtual reality and 3D interaction in the world, and we are proud to host it here in South Carolina. In recent years, the conference has travelled to Singapore, Orange County, USA, Orlando, USA, Minneapolis, USA, and Arles, France. During these years the conference has grown in many respects, yet the basic format of mostly a single-track technical session has changed little. This year’s conference, however, will feature some notable departures from previous years while still keeping with our cherished traditions of the IEEE VR conference.

Most significantly, the overall program has received a record number of submissions to the technical tracks. The program chairs consisted of Tobias Höllerer (University of California, Santa Barbara), Victoria Interrante (University of Minnesota), Anatole Lécuyer (Inria, France), and Evan Suma (University of Southern California), recruited a forty member international program committee (IPC) with experts from 12 different countries that reviewed the submissions, and participated in a two day program committee meeting to deliberate on the final decisions. The IEEE VR paper reviews were highly competitive this year. The IPC recommended 12.6% of all submissions for a second review cycle for inclusion of this selected group of full papers to be published in a special issue of the IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics (IEEE TVCG), and an additional 13.3% of the submissions for conditional acceptance and publication in the IEEE VR 2016 Conference Proceedings. This is an overall acceptance rate of 25.9%! Instead of full IEEE TVCG papers and IEEE VR short conference proceedings papers as was the tradition of late at the conference, this year we have mature 10 page technical papers accepted in either IEEE TVCG or the VR Conference Proceedings categories. In an ongoing collaboration with IEEE TVCG, we have included 6 relevant papers that are being presented by authors of previously accepted journal publications. This year we have extended this collaboration to the IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications journal (IEEE CG&A), and have included 2 relevant papers for presentation at the conference.

In addition, we have accepted 84 posters, 4 exciting panels encompassing topics such as CyberArcheology, Perception and Affordance research in Mixed and Virtual Reality, and Lessons for Game Developers from VR in the main conference program on Monday, March 21st through Wednesday, March 23rd. We are thrilled to have Ming Lin from UNC Chapel Hill as the Keynote speaker whose presentation “Towards Immersive Multimodal Display: Interactive Auditory Rendering for Complex Virtual Environments,” promises to be exciting in shedding light on an emerging field of generating realistic physically-based sounds from perceptually-guided principles and dynamic simulation. We are also elated to have another distinguished researcher, Timothy Bickmore, from Northeastern University who is giving a capstone presentation during the closing session titled, “Agents? Seriously.” Timothy is a pioneer in creating and deploying virtual human conversational agents in real-world clinical settings that form relationships with patients in a variety of healthcare situations such as cancer self-care, depression counseling, and pre-conception care—a talk that will illuminate and share knowledge in creating and deploying interactive VR systems in public settings. In order to accommodate this exciting list of technical presentations consisting of paper sessions, posters and panels, we have extended the single track technical paper session to a parallel session in the afternoons of Monday and Tuesday of the conference.

The weekend program at IEEE VR 2016 is jam packed with exciting activities. IEEE 3D User Interfaces Conference (IEEE 3DUI) 2016 will be hosted on Saturday, March 19th and Sunday, March 20th. In addition to IEEE 3DUI, there are 5 tutorials and 7 workshops of IEEE VR 2016 planned for the weekend. We are thrilled to report that the US National Science Foundation has again funded our IEEE VR Doctoral Consortium (VRDC ’16) to support the travel, registration, and accommodation of 12 competitively selected PhD students from around the world, which will also be hosted as part of the weekend program at IEEE VR 2016.

Our conference is also a time for social gathering of our colleagues and friends from our research community, and an opportunity for students to share their accomplishments with mentors and senior researchers in the field. We have organized social functions on every night of the conference for attendees to mingle and enjoy the proceedings of the day. The 3DUI contestants will be showing off their demos of collaborative interaction metaphors for 3D interaction during the 3DUI social on Saturday evening, March 19th. On Sunday evening, March 20th, we are hosting the Exhibitor’s reception to celebrate the 11 industrial exhibitors and 17 academic research demos selected for presentation at IEEE VR 2016. On the evening of Monday, March 21st, attendees will be transported to and from the campus of Clemson University for the Clemson Social and Demo night, during which attendees can view and engage with all the exciting VR, Visualization and Interactive Systems projects that are being developed at Clemson University. These events will also feature hors d’oeuvers and drinks for the attendees. On Tuesday, March 22nd evening, we will be hosting the IEEE VR 2016 banquet and technical awards acceptance presentations. In keeping with one our cherished traditions, this year we are privileged to have the VGTC VR Career awardee Thomas A. Furness III and VGTC Technical Achievement awardee Anthony Steed giving their awards acceptance talks at the IEEE VR 2016 banquet.

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Downtown Greenville, SC, is a vibrant city with a rich history, a beautiful scenic state park, several art, science and children’s museums, including Southern hospitality and charms as well as diverse ethnic restaurants. The Greenville Hyatt Regency conference center is situated on Main Street in the heart of downtown Greenville, and attendees will have the opportunity during lunch time at the conference to sample Greenville’s Southern cuisine and view its varied attractions. Putting together the IEEE VR 2016 conference is a team effort, and we are grateful to the large number of people who have contributed to the success of IEEE VR 2016. Particularly, the program chairs and program committee members, the panels, posters, workshops, tutorials, videos, exhibits, and doctoral consortium chairs, as well as the web and publication committees, in creating a rich and thrilling program. We would also like to thank the paid staff and our wonderful student volunteers, without whose hard work this event could not take place. We greatly thank our sponsors, IEEE, IEEE Computer Society (CS), Clemson University, and the Industrial sponsors and supporters. Finally, we thank each and every one of you who is attending the conference for the role you plan in participating, building, and enriching our VR research community, and we hope that you will greatly enjoy the conference and South Carolina.