Message from the General Chair

Looking back at the successful history of the past eleven “IEEE Workshops on Enabling Technologies: Infrastructure for Collaborative Enterprises” held in the U.S.A, WET ICE 2003 was organized for the first time in Europe, at the Johannes Kepler University of Linz, Austria, on June 9-11, 2003.

I would like to thank the Rector of the University of Linz, Prof. Dr. Rudolf Ardelt, for hosting WET ICE 2003 in the inspiring atmosphere of the University campus. I also would like to thank the City of Linz and the Mayor of Linz, Dr. Franz Dobusch, the Government of Upper Austria and its Minister President, Dr. Josef Pühringer, as well as the Linzer Hochschulfonds for supporting WET ICE 2003.

This year the workshops on (in an alphabetical order) (1) Agent-Based Computing for Enterprise Collaboration, (2) Distributed and Mobile Collaboration, (3) Enterprise Security, (4) Evaluating Collaborative Information Systems and Support for Virtual Enterprises, (5) Knowledge Management for Distributed Agile Processes, and (6) Theory and Practice of Open Computational Systems attracted over 80 participants from all over the world. In tradition with the previous WET ICE events, these six workshops had individual paper presentations and discussion. To foster the coordination and collaboration among the different groups, the joint plenary talks are an important part of the program. In 2003, the first keynote address was given by Alois Ferscha, University of Linz, on “Coordination in Pervasive Computing Environments”. The second day was started with an invited talk on “Network Threat Modeling” by Jesper M. Johansson, Microsoft Corporation. In the afternoon, Wolfgang Gerteis, CEC Karlsruhe, SAP, gave an invited talk on “Collaborative E-Learning” highlighting the industry perspective; this was complemented by the fourth keynote address given by S. V. Raghavan, IIT Madras, who discussed the topic of “Collaborative Enterprises” from the academic point of view. I would like to thank all the invited speakers for their valuable and interesting contributions.

In a plenary session at the end of the conference, the workshop organizers presented a brief summary of the key findings and contributions discussed in their individual sessions. The best paper for each workshop was briefly presented. It is one of the WET ICE major objectives to act as a source of reference for the state-of-the-art work on all aspects of collaboration. The WET ICE proceedings are appreciated as a valuable source of information in that respect. In addition, WET ICE also tries to show future trends and point out directions for future research. The WET ICE proceedings are post-conference proceedings, allowing the workshop organizers also to reflect on the discussions in the group reports that are included in the proceedings; these reports are besides the presentations, an equally important source of information. In the concluding discussion, one of the major issues was the trade-off between the need for sharing information, the need for collaboration, the need for awareness about others' activities, and the need for privacy and security. Considering the trend towards pervasive, ubiquitous, intelligent computing environments where a lot more devices will interact with the humans, and also among other collections a tremendous amount of information, this problem will become even more important in the future. It is our responsibility as researchers and practitioners to address these problems not only from a technical point of view stressing its feasibility, but also from a social point of view. The interdisciplinary nature of WET ICE will be an ideal platform for such discussions. Other challenges are seen in the need for appropriate collaboration and coordination models for these kinds of environments, in methodologies for evaluating the coordination, and in the reference architectures for collaboration and coordination, to name a few.

I would like to thank Sumitra and Ramana Reddy for their perfect support and long-term planning of WET ICE. I also would like to thank IEEE Computer Society, and CERC of West Virginia University as the sponsoring organizations. Finally, I would like to thank all workshop organizers and all workshop participants for shaping and contributing to a very interesting program. The quality of WET ICE depends very much on the contribution of its participants and I was very pleased to see a lot of interesting discussions. I hope, some of them will be continued in or at least at WET ICE 2004.

WET ICE 2004 will take place on June 14-16, 2004 in Modena, Italy, with Giacomo Cabri, Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, as the General Chair. I am looking forward to meeting this year’s WET ICE participants and hopefully a lot of new participants in Modena in 2004.

Gabriele Kotsis  
General Chair, WET ICE 2003