

FLAIRS 2000 Conference Report

Avelino Gonzalez and Massood Towhidnejad

The Thirteenth Annual International Conference of the Florida Artificial Intelligence Research Society (FLAIRS-2000) was held at the Hotel Royal Plaza, Orlando, Florida, on 22 to 24 May 2000. The cochairs of the conference were Avelino Gonzalez, University of Central Florida, and Massood Towhidnejad, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. The program chairs were Bill Manaris and Jim Etheredge, both of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Because FLAIRS is a general conference on AI, papers were presented in several traditional areas of AI. These included sessions on knowledge representation, natural language processing, validation, verification and system certification, AI in instructional software, uncertain reasoning, neural networks, genetic algorithms, machine learning, classification, data mining, and AI applications. The track entitled Validation, Verification, and System Certification, chaired by Rainer Knauf of the Technical University of Ilmenau in Germany, proved to be the most extensive. It sponsored nine paper presentations, one panel discussion, and one tutorial on the verification of software through formal theorem-proving methods. Additionally, some less than traditional areas of research were also represented, with sessions on spacecraft autonomy, spatiotemporal reasoning, knowledge management, and intelligent agents.

In the opening invited talk, Nicola Muscettola of NASA Ames spoke about deploying autonomous robots and the experiments conducted when autonomous software was permitted to control the Deep Space One probe for two days in May 1999. The REMOTE AGENT demonstrated the ability to generate plans, execute them effi-

ciently, and replan after device faults caused the original plan to become inadequate.

Subrata Dasgupta from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette spoke about the computer's role in the current revolution in cognitive science. His talk came from a historical perspective—how humankind has always felt an overwhelming need to understand the world around us and to control it for our own benefit. He further described how this need is now embodied in our need to understand our own cognitive processes—the very same organ that allows us to understand is not at all well understood. He described the roles that the computer has played as a metaphor for description and explanation and as an instru-

The Thirteenth Annual International Conference of the Florida Artificial Intelligence Research Society was held in Orlando, Florida, on 22 to 24 May. The conference included sessions on 11 topics. The session on validation, verification, and system certification was the most extensive. The conference also included panel discussions and invited talks by Subrata Dasgupta, Jim Hendler, and Janet Kolodner.

ment in augmenting our cognitive capacities.

The dinner presentation by Jim Hendler of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency introduced some provocative ideas on the web and AI. He pointed to the overwhelming amount of information accessible through the internet and how this information needs to be manipulated to allow us to more easily and effectively use the web. He described the web as seen through the eyes of an AI researcher and the

opportunities that lie therein for those in this field.

Finally, Janet Kolodner from the Georgia Institute of Technology spoke about the next step for case-based reasoning (CBR)—how it can be used to transfer information and knowledge to middle school students. This transfer is done through instructional software based on CBR called LEARNING BY DESIGN (LBD). LBD is a curriculum consisting of prescribed exercises that teach children real-world skills by having them perform several activities that are familiar to them. This reference of personal experiences by the students to real-world problems and issues mimics the essence of CBR.

The conference also had two panel discussions. The first focused on modern trends in funding opportunities for AI, moderated by Ingrid Russell of the University of Hartford. This group included an impressive list of panelists: Ephraim Glinert (National Science Foundation), Hendler, Alex Kilpatrick (Air Force Office of Scientific Research), and Alan Meyrowitz (National Research Laboratory). The second panel debated the issues of how to verify and validate intelligent systems and what role formal theorem provers play in this task. The panelists were Valerie Barr (Hofstra University), Joerg Siekmann (DFKI, Saarbruecken Germany), and Avelino Gonzalez (University of Central Florida). DFKI also presented a tutorial on the verification theorem prover VERIFICATION SOFTWARE ENVIRONMENT.

In all, approximately 120 attendees from 23 countries and several states in the United States presented a total of 70 papers.

FLAIRS-2001 will be held in Key West, Florida, on 21 to 23 May 2001. Doug Dankel, University of Florida, will be the general chair, and Ingrid Russell, University of Hartford, and John Kolen, University of West Florida, will be the program chairs.

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FLAIRS-2000—Orlando, Florida

Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Florida Artificial Intelligence Research Society Conference

Edited by Jim Etheredge and Bill Manaris

The Florida AI Research Society Conference was founded in 1987 to promote and advance AI research within the state of Florida, fostering interaction between researchers at colleges, universities, and industry. Since 1990, Florida AI Research Society conferences have been broadened to include participants and papers from across North America and the world. This year's proceedings covers a wide range of topics, including applications, computer vision, evolutionary computation, intelligent agents, knowledge-based systems, learning and AI, logic and AI, logic programming, natural language processing, planning, AI applied to spacecraft autonomy, evolutionary computation, intelligent tutoring systems, knowledge management, neural network applications, parallel and distributed reasoning, reasoning about function, spatiotemporal reasoning, uncertain reasoning, and verification, validation, and knowledge-base refinement.

ISBN 1-57735-113-4 400 pp., illus., index, \$50.00 softcover

FLAIRS-99—Orlando, Florida

Proceedings of the Twelfth International Florida Artificial Intelligence Research Society Conference

Edited by Amruth Kumar and Ingrid Russell

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ISBN 1-57735-080-4 560 pp., illus., index, \$50.00 softcover

FLAIRS-98—Sanibel Island, Florida

Proceedings of the Eleventh International Florida Artificial Intelligence Research Society Conference

Edited by Diane J. Cook

Topics in the proceedings include AI applications, AI education, computer vision, evolutionary computation, expert systems, genetic algorithms, intelligent agents, intelligent reasoning, intelligent tutoring systems, knowledge discovery in databases, knowledge representation, logic, machine learning, natural language processing, neural networks, reasoning about function, reinforcement learning, robotics, uncertainty reasoning, and verification and validation.

ISBN 1-57735-051-0 502 pp., index, \$50.00 softcover

Published by the AAAI Press

445 Burgess Drive • Menlo Park, California 94025

650-321-4457 (Fax) • 650-328-3123

<http://www.aaai.org/>