

Preface

Welcome to the tenth Midwest Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science Conference in Bloomington, Indiana!

To me this conference is a very special event. Graduate students are encouraged to submit papers. For many of them it may be the first time in their academic lives that they present their research to an audience of peers and experienced researchers outside of their familiar university settings. They have an opportunity to meet and discuss with well-known researchers in the field of artificial intelligence and cognitive science who have been invited for a presentation. Among the well-known speakers of previous years have been Patrick Hayes who spoke in 1995 at Carbondale about “computational wings”—comparing the objections to artificial intelligence to the objections to artificial flight, Douglas Hofstadter who presented (in 1996) in Bloomington “Speechstuff and Thoughtstuff: Musings on the Resonances Created by Words and Phrases Via the Subliminal Perception of their Buried Parts” and Jon Barwise who gave a speech on “What Is Information?” (in 1996) in Bloomington. This year we are delighted to have Douglas Hofstadter again as a keynote speaker discussing the “Science Fiction Future of AI”.

A second reason why the MAICS conference is such a special event is its peculiar mixture of topics. Papers from all areas of artificial intelligence and cognitive science, including computational linguistics, logic and automated reasoning, knowledge representation, learning, and philosophy of mind, are accepted. Together with the fact that usually only between twenty and thirty papers are presented, this often poses a challenge for setting up the conference program. One year several papers on *Roget's Thesaurus* may be submitted. Another year's program may have to accommodate several papers on medical expert systems. A third year may feature intelligent tutoring systems and several sessions on vision. A fourth year may include papers on self-organizing maps. And the following year may feature a panel discussion on whether or not AI is becoming robotics. These are just examples. I suspect papers for almost every possible AI and cognitive science topic have been presented during the past years. The wide variety of topics certainly

adds to the charm of the conference. This may be one of the reasons why even international participants from countries such as France, Holland, and Germany have attended the conference.

Besides the changing new faces among the graduate students every year, the long-time participants may have developed feelings of family reunion each time they see each other at the conference again. Some of the conference side events can certainly be as attractive as some of the main program points. I recall a (nonscheduled) late night Bluegrass jam session in Carbondale. The program from the conferences held in the Touch of Nature Center in Carbondale listed “Birding” as an early morning option. This contrasts with a reception at the famous US Airforce Museum in Dayton in 1997 or a tour through IU's CAVE Artificial Virtual Environment, which will be a side program option for this year's conference participants.

While thinking about whom I owe thanks to this year, the first person that comes to mind is Martha Evens. Martha Evens has continually supported the conference over the last 10 years. She served on the program committee many times. She has chaired the program of the conference, edited the proceedings, and every year encouraged several of her graduate students to submit papers. Without her involvement, the conference may not have continued for so many years and definitely would not be the same. Thanks, Martha! Next I wish to thank Jonathan Neff who worked hard on the local arrangements this year. I thank the program committee who always has to perform a miracle while reviewing the papers in a very short time. I thank the invited speakers for presenting at this conference.

Thanks to the staff and students of the CAVE for providing tours for the conference participants. I thank the long time conference participants for their continuing support and for encouraging their students to submit papers. And last but not least I thank the School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University for hosting the conference and for the financial support.

Uta Priss
Conference & Program Chair