

# Third Workshop on Enabling Technologies

## Infrastructure for Collaborative Enterprises

K. J. Cleetus

■ The Third Workshop on Enabling Technologies: Infrastructure for Collaborative Enterprises was held from 17–19 April 1994 in Morgantown, West Virginia, hosted by the Concurrent Engineering Research Center at West Virginia University. This report summarizes this year's workshop and outlines the philosophy behind this annual event.

The Third Workshop on Enabling Technologies: Infrastructure for Collaborative Enterprises (WET ICE), sponsored by the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Computer Society, was held from 17–19 April 1994 in Morgantown, West Virginia, and hosted by the Concurrent Engineering Research Center at West Virginia University. This report summarizes this year's workshop and outlines the philosophy behind this annual event.

The WET ICE workshop, now in its third year, has become a fixture of the collaborative computing scene. A more specialized event than the Computer-Supported Cooperative Work gathering, which takes in everyone from anthropologists to futurists, this workshop focuses on hardware and software that enables agents of all kinds to interact in a variety of ways to accomplish some task—quickly, correctly, and easily. Within this framework, the workshop has served to underscore the thrust of concurrent engineering research at the Concurrent Engineering Research Center, which organizes the WET ICE workshops.

The workshops have skirted the consideration of methodologies that

facilitate coordinated working, choosing to concentrate only on those techniques that have received the support of computing devices, broadly speaking, and that have transformed themselves into technologies, in however primitive a fashion. WET ICE has had to also steer clear of extensive fields such as distributed computing, client-server databases, and multimedia, which are all served by several large conferences. However, by positioning WET ICE precisely at the confluence of technology and collaboration in organizations and emphasizing its small, select nature, it

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has been possible to cull these disciplines and present the best research that has a bearing on the "repersonalization of computing," as Fernando flores, founder of Action Technologies, puts it.

This year, the 36 papers that were submitted came from Canada, France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and the United States. The referees did a magnificent job of judging the papers and selected 24. As in the past workshops, there were papers on network conferencing, computer protocols designed for collaboration, and architectures for

information sharing among project participants. The many papers contributed in enterprise modeling, software engineering, and work flow showed that these new areas of collaboration technology were emerging from the laboratory into the real world. Based on the interest profiles of the participants, three discussion groups were formed, and each met for about eight hours. Their reports summarize the state of the art in three distinct areas: (1) enterprise modeling, (2) collaborative software engineering, and (3) technology trends for collaborative support environments. (These reports, along with the 24 papers, were published as proceedings by the IEEE Computer Society Press.)

### Acknowledgments

The IEEE Computer Society continues to underwrite and support these workshops. WET ICE owes its existence to the initial generosity of the society, which is consistently repaid by the quality of the papers contributed and the attendance of a select band of researchers every year. The American Association for Artificial Intelligence funded 13 student participants this year, and the organizers express their thanks for this subsidy. The recognition of the Association for Computing Machinery Special Interest Group on Office Information Systems is also acknowledged. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) supports the Concurrent Engineering Research Center in its essential mission of dissemination; all the organizational effort that went into the workshop was funded by DARPA. Finally, I would like to thank V. Jagannathan for his great help and expertise in workshop management and Mary Carriger for relieving me of much of the burden of coordinating and conducting this workshop.

K. J. Cleetus is associate director of the Concurrent Engineering Research Center (CERC) and was program chair of WET ICE 1993. He has been with CERC since its inception in 1988. His interests are in software that enables team coordination and information sharing. He has a Ph.D. in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1968).