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Gadi Taubenfeld (Ed.)

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Preface

DISC, the International Symposium on Distributed Computing, is an annual forum for presentation of research on all aspects of distributed computing, including the theory, design, implementation and applications of distributed algorithms, systems and networks. The 22nd edition of DISC was held during September 22-24, 2008, in Arcachon, France.

There were 101 submissions submitted to DISC this year and this volume contains 33 15-page-long regular papers selected by the Program Committee among these submissions. Every submitted paper was read and evaluated by Program Committee members assisted by external reviewers. The final decisions regarding acceptance or rejection of each paper were made during the electronic Program Committee meeting held during June 2008. Revised and expanded versions of a few best selected papers will be considered for publication in a special issue of the journal *Distributed Computing*.

The Program Committee selected Robert Danek and Wojciech Golab as the recipients of this year's Best Paper Award for their paper "Closing the Complexity Gap Between FCFS Mutual Exclusion and Mutual Exclusion." The Program Committee selected Wojciech Wawrzyniak as the recipient of this year's Best Student Paper Award for the paper "Fast Distributed Approximations in Planar Graphs" coauthored with Andrzej Czygrinow and Michal Hańćkowiak.

This volume of the proceedings also contains 11 two-page-long brief announcements (BA). These BAs present ongoing work or recent results whose full description is not yet ready; it is expected that full papers containing these results will soon appear in other conferences or journals. The main purpose of the BA track is to announce ongoing projects to the distributed computing community and to obtain feedback for the authors. Each BA was also read and evaluated by the Program Committee.

The support of the sponsors, which are mentioned later, is gratefully acknowledged.

July 2008

Gadi Taubenfeld

The 2008 Edsger W. Dijkstra Prize in Distributed Computing

The Edsger W. Dijkstra Prize in Distributed Computing is awarded for an outstanding paper on the principles of distributed computing, whose significance and impact on the theory and/or practice of distributed computing has been evident for at least a decade.

The Dijkstra Award Committee has selected Baruch Awerbuch and David Peleg as the recipients of this year's Edsger W. Dijkstra Prize in Distributed Computing. The prize is given to them for their outstanding paper: "Sparse Partitions" published in the proceedings of the 31st Annual Symposium on Foundations of Computer Science, pp. 503–513, 1990.

The "Sparse Partitions" paper by Awerbuch and Peleg signified the coming-of-age of the area of distributed network algorithms. A line of research that started with Awerbuch's synchronizer and Peleg's spanner has culminated in this ground-breaking paper that has had a profound impact on algorithmic research in distributed computing and in graph algorithms in general.

The paper presents concrete definitions of the intuitive concepts of locality and load, and gives surprisingly effective constructions to trade them off. The fundamental technical contribution in the paper is the algorithm of coarsening, which takes, as input, a decomposition of the graph to possibly overlapping components, and generates a new decomposition whose locality is slightly worse, but whose load is far better. The desired balance between locality and load is controlled by a parameter provided by the user. While many other underlying ideas were present in prior work of Awerbuch and Peleg (separately), in the "Sparse Partitions" paper these ideas have come together, with a unified view, resulting in a new powerful toolkit that is indispensable for all workers in the field.

The magnitude of the progress achieved by the new techniques was immediately recognized, and its implications spawn much research to this day. In the "Sparse Partitions" paper itself, the authors improve on the best known results for two central problems of network algorithms, and many other applications of the results followed, quite a few of them in applications that were visionary at their time. To mention just a few, these include computation of compact routing tables and location services of mobile users (in the original paper), dramatically more efficient synchronizers, effective peer-to-peer network design, and scheduling in grid-like computing models. Besides these applications of the results, the paper can be viewed as one of the important triggers to much of the fundamental research that was dedicated to exploring other variants of the basic concepts, including the notions of bounded-growth graphs, tree metrics, general and geometric spanners.

It is interesting to view the Sparse Partitions paper in a historical context. The area of network algorithms has its roots in classical graph algorithms. Distributed algorithms have proved to be an algorithmically rich field with the “Minimum Spanning Tree” paper of Gallager, Humblet and Spira. Motivated by the asynchronous nature of distributed systems, Awerbuch invented the concept of a synchronizer. Peleg, coming from the graph theoretic direction, generalized the notion of spanning tree and invented the concept of spanners. In the “Sparse Partitions” paper, the additional ingredient of load was added to the combination, yielding a powerful conceptual and algorithmic tool. The results superseded the best known results for classical graph algorithms, thus showing the maturity of the field, which closed a circle by becoming a leading source for graph algorithms of any kind.

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Organization

DISC is an international symposium on the theory, design, analysis, implementation and application of distributed systems and networks. DISC is organized in cooperation with the European Association for Theoretical Computer Science (EATCS). The symposium was established in 1985 as a biannual International Workshop on Distributed Algorithms on Graphs (WDAG). The scope was soon extended to cover all aspects of distributed algorithms as WDAG came to stand for International Workshop on Distributed Algorithms, and in 1989 it became an annual symposium. To reflect the expansion of its area of interest, the name was changed to DISC (International Symposium on DIStributed Computing) in 1998. The name change also reflects the opening of the symposium to all aspects of distributed computing. The aim of DISC is to reflect the exciting and rapid developments in this field.



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Table of Contents

Regular Papers

The Mailbox Problem (Extended Abstract)	1
<i>Marcos K. Aguilera, Eli Gafni, and Leslie Lamport</i>	
Matrix Signatures: From MACs to Digital Signatures in Distributed Systems	16
<i>Amitanand S. Aiyer, Lorenzo Alvisi, Rida A. Bazzi, and Allen Clement</i>	
How to Solve Consensus in the Smallest Window of Synchrony	32
<i>Dan Alistarh, Seth Gilbert, Rachid Guerraoui, and Corentin Travers</i>	
Local Terminations and Distributed Computability in Anonymous Networks	47
<i>J��r��mie Chalopin, Emmanuel Godard, and Yves M��tivier</i>	
A Self-stabilizing Algorithm with Tight Bounds for Mutual Exclusion on a Ring (Extended Abstract)	63
<i>Viacheslav Chernov, Mordechai Shalom, and Shmuel Zaks</i>	
Fast Distributed Approximations in Planar Graphs	78
<i>Andrzej Czygrinow, Micha�� Ha��ckowiak, and Wojciech Wawrzyniak</i>	
Closing the Complexity Gap between FCFS Mutual Exclusion and Mutual Exclusion	93
<i>Robert Danek and Wojciech Gola��</i>	
The Weakest Failure Detector for Message Passing Set-Agreement	109
<i>Carole Delporte-Gallet, Hugues Fauconnier, Rachid Guerraoui, and Andreas Tielmann</i>	
Local Maps: New Insights into Mobile Agent Algorithms	121
<i>Bilel Derbel</i>	
r^3 : Resilient Random Regular Graphs	137
<i>Stanko Dimitrov, P. Krishnan, Colin Mallows, Jean Meloche, and Shalini Jaynik</i>	
Online, Dynamic, and Distributed Embeddings of Approximate Ultrametrics	152
<i>Michael Dinitz</i>	
Constant-Space Localized Byzantine Consensus	167
<i>Danny Dolev and Ezra N. Hoch</i>	

Optimistic Erasure-Coded Distributed Storage	182
<i>Partha Dutta, Rachid Guerraoui, and Ron R. Levy</i>	
On the Emulation of Finite-Buffered Output Queued Switches Using Combined Input-Output Queuing	197
<i>Mahmoud Elhaddad and Rami Melhem</i>	
On Radio Broadcasting in Random Geometric Graphs	212
<i>Robert Elsässer, Leszek Gąsieniec, and Thomas Sauerwald</i>	
Ping Pong in Dangerous Graphs: Optimal Black Hole Search with Pure Tokens	227
<i>Paola Flocchini, David Ilcinkas, and Nicola Santoro</i>	
Deterministic Rendezvous in Trees with Little Memory	242
<i>Pierre Fraigniaud and Andrzej Pelc</i>	
Broadcasting in UDG Radio Networks with Missing and Inaccurate Information	257
<i>Emanuele G. Fusco and Andrzej Pelc</i>	
Efficient Broadcasting in Known Geometric Radio Networks with Non-uniform Ranges	274
<i>Leszek Gąsieniec, Dariusz R. Kowalski, Andrzej Lingas, and Martin Wahlen</i>	
On the Robustness of (Semi) Fast Quorum-Based Implementations of Atomic Shared Memory	289
<i>Chryssis Georgiou, Nicolas C. Nicolaou, and Alexander A. Shvartsman</i>	
Permissiveness in Transactional Memories	305
<i>Rachid Guerraoui, Thomas A. Henzinger, and Vasu Singh</i>	
The Synchronization Power of Coalesced Memory Accesses	320
<i>Phuong Hoai Ha, Philippos Tsigas, and Otto J. Anshus</i>	
Optimizing Threshold Protocols in Adversarial Structures	335
<i>Maurice Herlihy, Flavio P. Junqueira, Keith Marzullo, and Lucia Draque Penso</i>	
Hopscotch Hashing	350
<i>Maurice Herlihy, Nir Shavit, and Moran Tzafrir</i>	
Computing Lightweight Spanners Locally	365
<i>Iyad A. Kanj, Ljubomir Perković, and Ge Xia</i>	
Dynamic Routing and Location Services in Metrics of Low Doubling Dimension (Extended Abstract)	379
<i>Goran Konjevod, Andréa W. Richa, and Donglin Xia</i>	

Leveraging Linial's Locality Limit	394
<i>Christoph Lenzen and Roger Wattenhofer</i>	
Continuous Consensus with Failures and Recoveries	408
<i>Tal Mizrahi and Yoram Moses</i>	
No Double Discount: Condition-Based Simultaneity Yields Limited Gain	423
<i>Yoram Moses and Michel Raynal</i>	
Bosco: One-Step Byzantine Asynchronous Consensus	438
<i>Yee Jiun Song and Robbert van Renesse</i>	
A Limit to the Power of Multiple Nucleation in Self-assembly	451
<i>Aaron D. Sterling</i>	
Using Bounded Model Checking to Verify Consensus Algorithms	466
<i>Tatsuhiro Tsuchiya and André Schiper</i>	
Theoretical Bound and Practical Analysis of Connected Dominating Set in Ad Hoc and Sensor Networks	481
<i>Alireza Vahdatpour, Foad Dabiri, Maryam Moazeni, and Majid Sarrafzadeh</i>	

Brief Announcements

On the Solvability of Anonymous Partial Grids Exploration by Mobile Robots	496
<i>Roberto Baldoni, François Bonnet, Alessia Milani, and Michel Raynal</i>	
The Dynamics of Probabilistic Population Protocols	498
<i>Ioannis Chatzigiannakis and Paul G. Spirakis</i>	
A Distributed Algorithm for Computing and Updating the Process Number of a Forest	500
<i>David Coudert, Florian Huc, and Dorian Mazauric</i>	
Corruption Resilient Fountain Codes	502
<i>Shlomi Dolev and Nir Tzachar</i>	
An Early-Stopping Protocol for Computing Aggregate Functions in Sensor Networks	504
<i>Antonio Fernández Anta, Miguel A. Mosteiro, and Christopher Thraves</i>	
Easy Consensus Algorithms for the Crash-Recovery Model	507
<i>Felix C. Freiling, Christian Lambertz, and Mila Majster-Cederbaum</i>	

Evaluating the Quality of a Network Topology through Random Walks	509
<i>Anne-Marie Kermarrec, Erwan Le Merrer, Bruno Sericola, and Gilles Trédan</i>	
Local-Spin Algorithms for Abortable Mutual Exclusion and Related Problems	512
<i>Robert Danek and Hyonho Lee</i>	
Data Failures	514
<i>Simona Orzan and Mohammad Torabi Dashti</i>	
Reliable Broadcast Tolerating Byzantine Faults in a Message-Bounded Radio Network	516
<i>Marin Bertier, Anne-Marie Kermarrec, and Guang Tan</i>	
Eventual Leader Election in the Infinite Arrival Message-Passing System Model	518
<i>Sara Tucci-Piergiovanni and Roberto Baldoni</i>	
Author Index	521