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G. Cooperman, E. Jessen and G. Michler (Eds)

Workshop on Wide Area Networks and High Performance Computing

With 136 Figures



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Preface

A workshop on "High Performance Computing and Gigabit Wide Area Networks" was held from 1 until 5 September 1998 at the Institute for Experimental Mathematics of Essen University, Germany. It was organized by Professor Gene Cooperman (Northeastern University, Boston), Professor E. Jessen (Technical University, Munich) and Professor G. Michler (Institute for Experimental Mathematics, Essen). The 36 participants came from Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the United States.

Distributed high performance computation in wide area high speed networks is a new interdisciplinary area of research. It requires the co-operation of mathematicians with computer scientists and communication engineers, because the technical problems caused by the latency cannot be solved by the mathematicians. The mathematical problems produce large amounts of data which have to be communicated quickly and correctly between the different computers at the various locations. Therefore new protocols and management tools have to be developed. Also it turns out that the network hardware has to be chosen carefully, and in particular routers should be avoided wherever possible. The main aim of the meeting was a careful analysis of the interplay between computer network technology, communication software and the performance of mathematical algorithms used for large scale computations in wide area high speed computer networks.

At least in the United States the number of supercomputer centers is shrinking, and also in Germany it will be difficult to provide enough resources for high performance computations in basic University research areas. It has been known for a long time that distributed high performance computing offers an alternative to demanding parallel computations on supercomputers. There are many mathematical problems for which it is possible to develop efficient algorithms which are suitable for distributed computations on middle sized parallel computers of different institutions connected by means of a high speed network. However, so far only a few scientists have access to such wide area high speed networks.

Another goal of the meeting was to give a survey about the existing and planned high speed networks in the United States, Europe, and in particular in Germany.

By bringing together scientists working in computer networks, network protocols and numerical and linear algebra, the meeting has given new insights that would not have been attainable otherwise. Only by interdisciplinary research through the co-operation of electrical engineers, mathematicians and computer scientists will it be possible to determine the most efficient combinations of parallel algorithms, protocols and network hardware. This is a

new and fruitful research area to which the 22 refereed research articles of these proceedings contribute.

At the end of these proceedings we list the titles of the 29 original invited lectures of the workshop, along with the addresses of all the participants.

The conference was supported in part by the Volkswagen Foundation, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, National Science Foundation (USA) and the University of Essen. The editors of these proceedings thank these institutions and corporations for their generous help.

Boston, München, Essen, June 30, 1999

G. Cooperman

E. Jessen

G. Michler

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