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Preface

The 16th Australian Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AI 2003) was held in Perth, Western Australia for the third time (1990 and 1997 were the previous dates). The remoteness of Perth resulted in a different approach to organizing the conference, which all four of the publicly funded universities in Western Australia combined resources to organize and run. It was held on the campus of the University of Western Australia, which has a somewhat traditional campus feel with on-campus accommodation and an environment conducive to academic discussion and debate.

The conference was organized under the auspices of the National Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Expert Systems of the Australian Computer Society (ACS), the main body representing information technology in Australia. The goal of the conference series is to promote the exchange of ideas and collaboration across the different subdisciplines of artificial intelligence by serving as a forum for the somewhat spatially separated researchers and practitioners in Australia and the surrounding region.

Given the current climate in the world, it was marvelous to see so many papers submitted, especially as there are other conferences covering similar ground in the region.

The conference could not have been a success without the contributions of the sponsors. First, the National Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Expert Systems, which provided substantial seed funding. Second, the four universities that each contributed to the funds. And, third, the IEEE WA section, which contributed the student prize.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the organizing committee, especially for travelling across Perth to meet each other regularly. We would also like to thank all the reviewers who unselfishly reviewed many papers. This is a time-consuming process that is a vital part of the research community's activities, and a conference cannot function without this peer-review process. We would also like to thank all the student volunteers and others we haven't mentioned for their contributions.

December 2003

Geoff West and Svetha Venkatesh

Introduction

AI 2003 was the 16th in the series of annual conferences on artificial intelligence held in Australia. This conference is the major forum for the presentation of artificial intelligence research in Australia, and has traditionally attracted strong international participation, a trend continued this year.

High quality papers make a conference a success. This volume is based on the proceedings of AI 2003. Full-length versions of all submitted papers were reviewed by an international program committee, with each paper receiving at least two independent reviews. From the 179 submissions received, a total of 68 papers were accepted for oral presentation, and a further 19 for poster presentation. This is an acceptance rate of 38% for oral presentation and 50% overall. The full papers of all presentations are included in this volume.

In addition to the refereed papers, the conference featured a program of tutorials, and plenary talks by four invited speakers covering a number of the subdisciplines of artificial intelligence. The speakers were: Kotagiri Ramamohanarao (University of Melbourne), Mohan S. Kankanhalli (National University of Singapore), Claude Sammut (University of New South Wales), and B. John Oommen (Carleton University, Canada).

We would like to thank the members of the Program Committee and the panel of reviewers who produced some 400 paper reviews under time constraints. Without your help, this conference could not have succeeded. In addition, we are also grateful to Springer-Verlag for its support and collaborations.

December 2003

Tom Gedeon and Lance Fung

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