

Lecture Notes in Computer Science

2996

Edited by G. Goos, J. Hartmanis, and J. van Leeuwen

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STACS 2004

21st Annual Symposium
on Theoretical Aspects of Computer Science
Montpellier, France, March 25-27, 2004
Proceedings



Springer

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Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek
Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <<http://dnb.ddb.de>>.

CR Subject Classification (1998): F, E.1, I.3.5, G.2

ISSN 0302-9743

ISBN 3-540-21236-1 Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg New York

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Printed in Germany

Typesetting: Camera-ready by author, data conversion by PTP-Berlin, Protago-TeX-Production GmbH
Printed on acid-free paper SPIN: 10991633 06/3142 5 4 3 2 1 0

Preface

The Symposium on Theoretical Aspects of Computer Science (STACS) is alternately held in France and in Germany. The conference of March 25–27, 2004 at the Corum, Montpellier was the twenty-first in this series. Previous meetings took place in Paris (1984), Saarbrücken (1985), Orsay (1986), Passau (1987), Bordeaux (1988), Paderborn (1989), Rouen (1990), Hamburg (1991), Cachan (1992), Würzburg (1993), Caen (1994), München (1995), Grenoble (1996), Lübeck (1997), Paris (1998), Trier (1999), Lille (2000), Dresden (2001), Antibes (2002), and Berlin (2003).

The symposium looks back at a remarkable tradition of over 20 years. The interest in STACS has been increasing continuously during recent years and has turned it into one of the most significant conferences in theoretical computer science. The STACS 2004 call for papers led to more than 200 submissions from all over the world.

The reviewing process was extremely hard: more than 800 reviews were done. We would like to thank the program committee and all external referees for the valuable work they put into the reviewing process of this conference.

We had a two-day meeting for the program committee in Montpellier during November 21–22, 2003. Just 54 papers (i.e., 27% of the submissions) could be accepted, as we wanted to keep the conference in its standard format with only two parallel sessions. This strict selection guaranteed the very high scientific quality of the conference.

We would like to thank the three invited speakers Claire Kenyon (École Polytechnique, Palaiseau), Erich Grädel (RWTH, Aachen), and Robin Thomas (Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta) for presenting their recent results at STACS 2004.

Special thanks for the local organization go to Christophe Paul and Celine Berger, who spent a lot of time and effort, and did most of the organizational work, and thanks also go to the Ph.D. students of the graph algorithms project for their support. We acknowledge the financial support STACS 2004 received from the CNRS, the Montpellier Agglomeration, the Languedoc Roussillon region, the University of Montpellier, and the LIRMM.

Montpellier, January 2004

Volker Diekert
Michel Habib

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