Chairs' Column

AUSTIN HENDERSON AND PETER POLSON

This column discusses Austin Henderson's recent travels, INTERCHI '93, and a selection of topics covered at the Extended Executive Committee Meeting held in Boston in December.

COLUMNS

Austin Henderson's travels this fall and early winter have taken him around the world to Japan, Russia, and the Netherlands. Later he returned to Amsterdam for an INTERCHI '93 planning meeting. The following is his description of these trips.

AUSTIN'S TRAVELS

Austin and a number of other SIGCHI members colleagues spent time (American Thanksgiving actually) in Japan at the Friend21 symposium and workshop. This bi-annual international meeting reviews some of the work being done by Friend21, the MITI/industry-supported collaborative effort on developing thoughts and prototypes for user interfaces for the 21st century. The work is very ambitious, focussed on interfaces which are smart enough to make changes in the metaphor by which they present the information to users. There is also a strong streak of multi-media work, and some nice additions to the working together at a distance technology.

On SIGCHI's behalf, Austin also visited Moscow to meet and talk with a group of people who are keen on starting a local chapter of SIGCHI. Austin was hosted by Juri Gornostaev, who is head of the Computer Department of the International Center for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow. They had an excellent meeting, and we are pleased to say the work to set up the local SIG is proceeding rapidly. Also, an email distribution list (Moscow.CHI@ccic.icsti.icsti.msk. su) has been set up reaching HCI colleagues in Moscow, Russia, and some of the other Eastern European republics. It has been added to SIGCHI's growing broadcast e-mail channel (Announcements.chi@Xerox..com— educational material only please). The connection of our Eastern European colleagues with the western HCI community is very exciting.

Austin visited Amsterdam (great city!) twice in two months in preparing for INTERCHI'93. We're pleased to report that the plans for the conference are coming along wonderfully (see the booth at CHI'92 in Monterey). The blending of the CHI and INTERACT traditions is going swimmingly, and the people on the committee are wonderful fun to work with. The conference will be somewhat more expensive than a regular CHI conference, as we cannot use hotel conference rooms - European hotels don't work that way, and, besides, our conference is large by European standards. Instead, INTERCHI will be held in the really wonderful spaces and conference rooms available at the Amsterdam conference center, commonly known as the RAI. INTERCHI'93 should be a great conference.

SIGCHI EXTENDED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EEC) MEETING, December 6-7, 1991

The EEC met in Boston in December for its fall meeting which includes a

special focus on Long Range Planning. Topics that were discussed included: Revision of the ByLaws (we must bring them up to date with our practices), the creation of Special Interest Areas within SIGCHI, the relationship between SIGCHI and ACM (representation, alignment of SIG and ACM activities, and balance between volunteer and staff roles), policy on international activities, the future of CHI conferences (role of Special Interest Areas, videotaping parts of the conference, electronic publication of proceedings), the status and role of industry and academia in SIGCHI, and publications issues.

We are also struggling to create a responsible fiscal structure. With rising costs, and the use of professional help (both at ACM headquarters and at conferences) we examined our budgets for FY 92 (the current year) and FY 93 (upcoming). It is clear that the major cost to SIGCHI is the distribution of the *SIGCHI Bulletin* and proceedings, of which there have recently been a number. On reflection, the EEC felt very strongly that the distribution of conference proceedings, both from the annual CHI conference, and also from the growing number of other SIGCHI-supported conferences (e.g. UIST, Hypertext, CSCW), was an important benefit to SIGCHI's members. However, dues do not cover these costs (even if it were limited to the CHI proceedings). Rather than stop this important service to members, the EEC voted to increase dues $5.00 in order to move in the direction of being able to eventually distribute the proceedings of all SIGCHI-supported conferences. This dues change will take effect July 1, 1992.

There have been a number of changes in volunteer chairs. Peter Orbeton has stepped down from *UI Magazine* chair, and Bill Hefley is continuing the wonderful work that Peter did in creating a firm foundation for the Magazine. Connie Parkes has turned over the reigns of Local SIGs to Vivienne Begg. Thank you very much, Connie, for a job well done: SIGCHI is growing Local SIGs faster than anyone else. Welcome aboard Vivi-

enne to a most important function. Bill Anderson has accepted the chair of Special Interest Areas, a post which will help create the substructure necessary within a SIG with such diverse interests and perspectives. Finally, Wendy Mackay is stepping down after a short but intense appointment on the ACM Publications Board—Wendy has done a great job in carrying the needs of the SIGs to that board.

Finally, Tom Hewett, chair of the Curriculum Development Group, announced the completion and release of the Report of the Curriculum Development Committee. It will be distributed along with the April issue of the *SIGCHI Bulletin* and also via the online services made available through Ohio State University and the hard work of Gary Perlman. Additional copies will also be available for purchase from the ACM.

The *ACM SIGCHI Curricula for Human-Computer Interaction* is a great report. The EEC accepted the report and strongly thanked to the Committee for a job well done. This is required reading for all of us.

TOCHI AND THE USER INTERFACE MAGAZINE

A very significant portion of the two-day EEC Meeting was devoted to the discussions of starting an ACM Transactions on CHI-related issues (TOCHI) and plans for a User Interface Magazine. In addition to the members of the EEC, Joe DeBlasi, Executive Director of ACM, William Gruener, Chair of the ACM Publications Board, Mark Mendelbaum, Director of the ACM Office of Publications, and Janet Benton, Associate Director for Publications, also attended the meeting. What was important about our discussions is all of the key players involving future decisions concerning publications were in attendance.

TOCHI

The SIGCHI EEC has formally decided to go ahead and submit a proposal for the establishment of a Trans-

actions oriented towards CHI issues (TOCHI) to the ACM Publications Board, which must formally approve such decisions. There is a great deal of enthusiasm and support among the CHI community. The key issue is finding a charter for our new transactions that would be consistent with the charters of two existing CHI-related, ACM Transactions, *Transactions on Graphics* and *Transactions on Information Systems*. If you have any contributions to make to the planning of our new journal, join the discussion on the mailing list publications.chi@xerox.com by sending a request to join this distribution list to registrar.chi@xerox.com.

User Interface Magazine

During the last two years, SIGCHI has been exploring the possibility of starting a *User Interface* Magazine directed at the development community and publishing syntheses of research results and other articles of interest to practitioners. ACM Headquarters, under Mark Mandelbaum's direction, has carried out extensive financial planning activities for this new magazine. SIGCHI has provided the resources for hiring of a market research firm to explore the market and need for such a magazine.

The market research results have been incredibly encouraging. Our colleagues with day-to-day responsibilities for developing user interfaces for existing and new products expressed strong interest in such a magazine and noted that there were no competing publications currently available. Furthermore, all expressed a great need for the kinds of articles that would be contained in the proposed magazine. The financial planning being done in collaboration with people at ACM Headquarters and Peter Orbeton uncovered real difficulties for the magazine. Different plans involving a mixture of professional staff and volunteers led to projected deficits of between a quarter and half million dollars by the beginning of the third year of operation. Plans that amortized these deficits in a reasonable period of time required high subscrip-

tion price, in the range of $50 for a year's subscription of 6 issues. The discussion continued by defining two possible paths: evolve the *SIGCHI Bulletin* using entirely volunteer staff; or to completely specify our vision and then take it outside.

Bill Hefley, editor of the *SIGCHI Bulletin*, and John Rheinfrank , a member of the Extended Executive Committee, have volunteered to continue the work begun by Peter Orbeton. Bill and John will produce a plan describing their vision of the magazine to be discussed at May '92 meeting. The plan will be useful for either route and it will include an editorial plan, a detailed design for the new magazine and perhaps a prototype magazine. This plan will also review the various business plans which have been prepared.

The EEC will make the decision at its May 9 meeting at the Doubletree in Monterey (right after CHI '92) of whether to attempt to publish the magazine using volunteers under ACM auspices, or try to sell the concept to a commercial publisher or another technical society.

CHI Technical Program

Finally, the Executive Committee decided to establish a new distribution list, technicalprogram.chi at xerox.-com, for the discussion of issues concerning the future of the CHI conference technical program. This discussion is being moderated by Rob Jacob, Vice Chair for Conference Planning. We encourage you to participate in this discussion if you have interests in such issues by joining the distribution list in the usual manner by sending an email message to registrar.chi at xerox.com.

Plan to Attend CHI'92

The last word is one of encouragement to attend CHI'92 in Monterey, California USA, May 3-7, 1992, and welcome to all who attend. It should be a great conference. Many thanks are due to Jim Miller and Scooter Morris and their committee and volunteers who have put so much time and effort into planning and realizing this grand gathering. Great job folks!

Welcome all to CHI'92.

Austin & Peter

P.S. If you need information about attending CHI'92, check out the Advance Program or fax your request to CHI'92 at +1-415-738-1280.

The Executive Committee meeting, as well as Business Meeting held during the CHI'92 conference, are open meetings and we look forward to your participation.