

Two Meetings Policy Questions for the IT Society
(document for discussion at Conference Committee meeting, 28 June, 2009 Seoul,
Room "207A" (2F) at COEX

This document contains proposals for how the Conference Committee might address two issues that came up in the last few months. (I prepared it based on the emails we exchanged, to help focus discussion at our meeting in Seoul. -B. Hajek, 26 June 2009)

1. On the purpose and accessibility of IT Workshops.

It's difficult for the conference committee or the BoG to "just say no" when a group proposes to organize an IT workshop which looks largely like a mini (or not so mini) ISIT. But it is worth communicating to organizers, and the whole IT Society Community, that workshops don't need to be that way. I suggest the conference committee and BoG endorse a policy statement along the following lines:

ON THE PURPOSE AND ACCESSIBILITY OF IT WORKSHOPS

The Conference Committee and the Board of Governors of the IEEE Information Theory Society would like to challenge members of the IT Society to be more creative in organizing workshops which complement ISITs (which are the flagship meetings of the Society), rather than mimicking the ISITs. In particular, there are substantial opportunities to:

(a) Run workshops with focused cutting-edge technical agendas, in a variety of sizes and creative formats. Workshops can be run jointly with other technical organizations, with half the program committee coming from each organization, to form an agenda at the intersection. For example, the 1993 IT Workshop on coding, system theory and symbolic dynamics, introduced three communities to each other. Each participant had a color-coded badge indicating which "languages" s/he spoke, and the organizers produced a "multiilingual dictionary." At the insistence of the mathematicians, costs were held very low. Workshops can have panel discussions. They can include working portions which seek to foster new collaborations. Workshops can be as short as one or two days long. Workshops do not need to have contributed papers and twenty minute talks with papers reviewed by TPCs very similar to ISITs. A workshop can be highly productive with as few as twenty to forty participants.

(b) Make workshops more accessible. Due to their large size, ISITs are mostly held at hotels and require payments for refreshments, and often some meals, from the hotels. Due to their small size, workshops could be organized on university campuses or other venues which could be significantly more affordable than ISITs. Creative or no-frills venues in locations near major transportation nodes could be roughly half as expensive per day as an ISIT or a high-end workshop.

2. On accessibility of IT Society Meetings to local scientists

Some meetings of the IT Society are held in economically challenged countries, and the meeting organizers find that the individuals from the host country would find paying the regular registration fee for the meeting a great burden. The Conference Committee and the Board of Governors recognize that there may be scientists who simply cannot afford the expense of conference attendance, but who would benefit (themselves and the world) if we made it possible for them to attend when a meeting is in their backyard. The IT Society would like to see the meetings be accessible to local scientists, but with still maintaining the target meeting profit, and without making the registration fee excessively high for full paying participants.

- (a) The IT Society is against providing total registration waivers, unless there is an outside grant for registration. Rather, it prefers that reduced registration rates be instituted for local scientists.
- (b) The IT Society encourages conference organizers to secure a grant from industry or government to cover registration fees for deserving local scientists.
- (c) To make reduced registration fees more palatable to full paying attendees, the Conference organizers are encouraged to consider finding opportunities for the scientists receiving the reduced registration fees to support the conference in other ways, and/or to have the reduced registration fees exclude meal functions, Conference Proceedings, or other side activities.

(The relevant IEEE policy on registration fees is given in the appendix.)

Appendix

IEEE Policies and Procedures **10.1.15 Registration Fee Requirements** (Source: <http://www.ieee.org/web/aboutus/whatis/policies/p10-1.11.12.13.14.15.xml#10.1.15>)

IEEE solely sponsored and co-sponsored conferences, must have a member/nonmember individual registration fee differential, whether paid in advance or at the door. The amount of the differential shall be at least 20% above the IEEE member fee, the exact amount being set by each Conference Committee. Conferences may establish a registration fee lower than the IEEE member fee for sponsoring organizational unit members.

Conferences where IEEE is the sole sponsor must have a reduced fee, waiver of fees, or fee differential for Student members and Life Members. Reduced fees, waiver of fees, or fee differential for unemployed IEEE members, retired members, and for special registrants (e.g., guests, speakers, and exhibitors) are permitted at the discretion of the Conference Committee. The individual registration fee for Life Members must be no more than that for Students.

At the discretion of the Conference Committee, the IEEE member registration rates may apply to members of non-IEEE co-sponsoring, cooperating organizations, or sister societies.

IEEE Conferences and Organization Manual 9.1.4.2

(Source: http://www.ieee.org/web/conferences/mom/sectoct_9.html)

9.1.4.2 Students, Retired, Life Members [IEEE Policy & Procedures \(10.1.15\)](#) permits reduced conference registration fees for students, unemployed IEEE members, retired and Life members and special VIP guests, at the discretion of the Conference Committee and sponsoring entity. Unless otherwise stipulated, the registration fee for retired and Life members should be no more than the registration fee for students. These reduced registration fees may exclude meal functions, Conference Proceedings and other side activities.