

Conference on Spatial Information Theory 2007

Highly Interactive Environment

The COSIT 2007 International Conference on Spatial Information Theory, organized by Stephan Winter, Matt Duckham, Lars Kulik and Ben Kuipers, brought together researchers from many different disciplines including computer science, spatial information, geography, artificial intelligence, cognitive science, neuroscience, linguistics and philosophy.

By Angela Schwering



Werner Kuhn, Carsten Kessler, David Mark, Stephen Hirtle and Andrew Frank participating in the workshop on semantic similarity measurement and geospatial applications (photograph by Krzysztof Janowicz).

COSIT provided a platform for leading international researchers, younger researchers and industry players to exchange information on the perception, modeling, and processing of geo-information, both in theory and in practice, and to discuss their thoughts on the future. It is a bi-annual conference that has taken place alternately in Europe and America since 1993. This year for the first time COSIT was in Australia: it was held in Melbourne from September 19 to 23. Although there was speculation there would be fewer submissions than in previous COSIT conferences since Europeans and Americans, who traditionally make up a large proportion of COSIT participants, would have to make long journeys, the number of submissions was very impressive: COSIT 2007 had a record 102 submissions. Twenty-seven papers were accepted for full presentation in the Springer series Lecture Notes in Computer Science Volume 4736. With just a 26 per cent acceptance rate, it was a very competitive conference. This guaranteed that the publications, which were presented in a single-track format, were of the usual high quality. Additionally, 25 peer-reviewed posters completed the program.

Highly Interactive

A highly interactive and friendly environment has always been a special characteristic of COSIT. This year's COSIT kept up the tradition:



COSIT 2007 was located in the Melbourne Business School at Mt Eliza. The nearby beach allowed for extensive walks with colleagues and friends (photograph by Krzysztof Janowicz).

staying at the same conference hotel was the ideal framework for meeting old friends, but it also gave the opportunity to make contact. The beautiful location created a relaxed atmosphere which gave participants the impression they were at a reunion with old friends rather than a conference.

Interdisciplinary Approaches

COSIT 2007 began with four pre-conference workshops on spatial cognition in architectural design, a workshop on semantic similarity measurement and geospatial application, a joint workshop on distributed geoinformatics and sensing ubiquity and mobility, and a workshop on social space and geographic space. The first day of the main conference started with Stephan Winter's opening remarks, followed by a keynote talk on knowledge systems given by Deborah McGuiness and paper sessions on cultural studies, semantics, and similarity. A poster session in the evening facilitated in-depth discussions with individual researchers.

The conference also covered topics centered on mapping and representation, perception and cognition (day 3), and reasoning and algorithms, navigation and landmarks and uncertainty and imperfection (day 4). The second keynote talk, "Constraint Solving and Optimization", was given by Kim Marriott. The conference concluded with a doctoral colloquium organized by Alexander Klippel. Twenty-four Ph.D. students were given the opportunity to present their research on such classic geoinformatics topics as maps and vagueness, uncertainty and similarity in data processing, as well as on interdisciplinary approaches in the area of cognition of the environment and social, political and ontological aspects of space.

COSIT 2007 was a very successful conference and offered a large number of very interesting presentations. I especially liked the highly interactive and intimate atmosphere, one reason that strong bonds and friendships have developed in our small but growing research community of spatial information theory.

Angela Schwering (aschweri@uni-osnabrueck.de)
University of Osnabrück, Germany.