

Preface

Since 1984, the Artificial Intelligence: Methodology, Systems, and Applications (AIMSA) conference series has provided a biennial forum for the presentation of artificial intelligence research and development. The conference covers the full range of topics in AI and related disciplines and provides an ideal forum for international scientific exchange between central/eastern Europe and the rest of the world. The AIMSA conferences were previously chaired by Wolfgang Bibel, Tim O'Shea, Philippe Jorrand, Ben du Boulay, Allan Ramsay and Fausto Giunchiglia. AIMSA 2000 is sponsored by ECCAI, the European Coordinating Committee for Artificial Intelligence.

The AIMSA 2000 call for papers suggested that authors focus on Web processing: knowledge construction from the Web, agents and communication languages, Web-based documents and interfaces, distance learning and electronic commerce. The importance of the conference for AI, and computer science research in general, was reflected by the presence of 60 qualified papers, out of which 34 were selected for publication by the Program Committee. Each paper was submitted to at least two independent referees and, in order to be accepted, had to be accepted by at least two of them. The high percentage of the accepted papers reflects the autonomy of the Program Committee members, who judged that more than 50% of the contributions were worth publishing in the Proceedings. Most rejected papers were not considered of a low scientific quality, but the Program Committee members judged that the required revisions on the texts could not be completed in the time required to allow editing of the paper before the final presentation.

This LNAI volume includes the selected papers, sorted into topics respecting the sequence of presentations at the conference as much as possible. The reader can evaluate if and how the suggestions from the Committee concerning the focus were influential for the Authors.

AIMSA 2000 invited two internationally recognized scientists: Enrico Motta from the Knowledge Media Laboratory, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK, for his work on ontologies and knowledge reuse, and Christian Queinnec from the Laboratoire d'Informatique de Paris VI (LIP6), France for his contributions to Web processing by reinterpreting functional language primitives in terms of navigation on the Web.

The Program and the Organizing Committees were very honored and satisfied with the success of the conference. AIMSA 2000 achieved the important goal of supporting advanced research activities, collaborations and joint endeavors between current and future leading scientists in artificial intelligence. In particular, AIMSA 2000 contributed to the peaceful and productive east-west European unification process, connecting countries from the North and the South of the world as well, around the common interest of collaborative scientific discovery and cultural development.

We are pleased to thank the authors for their significant efforts, both in improving the content and the form of their papers. We are grateful to the Program Committee members: all have been very collaborative and have taken great care in their evaluations. Authors and Program Committee members, as well as an extremely active Organizing Committee, have made it possible to believe that competence and skills in AI research are still considered very attractive activities in the year 2000, even when the explosive growth of business interests around information and telecommunication applications worldwide seems to call irresistibly our students and young colleagues directly from their early academic experience into business.

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