

Message from the WiP Session Co-Chairmen

Factory communications is a rapidly evolving field, both in practical application and research. Networking and automation are currently major driving forces, and there are many open problems still to be solved. For this reason, the organizers of WFCs 2000 decided for the first time to also include a "Work in Progress" session in the program as a forum for presenting and discussing ongoing projects.

In response to the call, we received the overwhelming number of 21 submissions. Due to space limitations, only 14 papers could be accepted for presentation in the workshop. A fast but thorough reviewing process allowed to select the best papers in terms of originality, clarity and possible impact of expected results.

The papers show very well which topics receive most attention today. Three articles deal with overcoming the limitations (both spatial and data rate) of fieldbus systems, two examine the comparatively new subject of wireless fieldbusses. New hardware to speed up networks is proposed by another two papers, and one article proposes new solutions to the old communicating-tasks scheduling problem. As systems grow more complex, specification, engineering, and management becomes problematic. This fact is mirrored by six papers dealing with various aspects of management, data representation, specification, but also simulation of complex systems.

We would like to thank all the authors who submitted their work to this WiP session. It seems we have gathered the necessary ingredients for a very interesting and stimulating discussion. We would also like to acknowledge the precious help given by José Alberto Fonseca, Ernesto Martins, José Luís Azevedo and Paulo Pedreiras in the reviewing process. Last but not the least, we also acknowledge the cooperation given by the Electronics and Telecommunications Department of the University of Aveiro (DETUA) which allowed to publish the WiP proceedings as a special number of its journal *Revista do DETUA*.

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