IEEE International Conference on Blockchain and Cryptocurrency 2023 (ICBC 2023), Dubai, UAE
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ICBC 2023 is the 5th edition of the IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc)-sponsored IEEE International Conference on Blockchain and Cryptocurrency. It is the society’s primary forum for reporting the latest research results and innovations, regulations, standards, industry practice innovations, and policies in the exciting, emerging, and challenging area of blockchains and cryptocurrencies. It was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on May 1–5, 2023, at the Sofitel Dubai Downtown Hotel.

It was a challenging task to win the bid for Dubai as we were a bit late in bidding, but this happened at the end of the Corona pandemic times, too, which provided a very good planning basis for ICBC, since Dubai’s measures and procedures for daily life and event organizations in the context of the pandemic had almost returned to normal. We acknowledge proudly the help of Dubai Tourism in enhancing the bid by offering the conference’s attendees with ample information about what Dubai could offer to visitors. The support and gold sponsorship of the Canadian University Dubai and the support of the IEEE UAE Section were also highly valuable in helping secure the bid despite stiff competition.

The excellent location (at Downtown Dubai) was carefully chosen, and the hotel’s local amenities and performance to the high satisfaction of the attendees. Just to exemplify, breakfast as part of the room fees and lunches as part of the conference fees offered a very wide range of local and international food options with high quality. Although the hotel venue was close to the many attractions Dubai is offering, the rate of attendance of the conference was noticeably high till the last workshop on CryptoEx’23. Overall, three social events were organized during the conference, the first one was a cocktail reception by the grass-pool of the hotel overlooking Burj Khalifa and Dubai Downtown. The second one was a Dhow cruise and dinner in the Dubai Marina area with music and Tennoura dance show. And the third one was the Gala Dinner at the hotel’s ballroom with a sumptuous banquet. Thus, the first dimension of an attractive set-up for an important conference and event had been dealt with successfully.

On the second dimension, especially the technical content of an IEEE event, in this year’s edition of ICBC 2023, we have received 266 submissions, including full/short papers, posters, Systematization-of-Knowledge (SoK) papers, and Demos, which had been contributed to by 694 authors from 37 countries. In addition, two workshops had been collocated with the main conference track, namely CryptoEx’23 and Crosschain’23. Out of these overall submissions, about 24.7% were from North America, 31% from Europe, 33.4% from Asia/pacific, 5.1% from Australia, and 5.8% from the rest of the world. While each paper had received at least three reviews, from the technical program committee consisting of 175 experts in total, overall, 130 papers (including workshops) were retained to appear in the proceedings in its different categories.
Through this rigorous process, the program compiled shows a very high-quality: only 33 full papers have been selected for the single-track program, corresponding to a competitive acceptance rate of 18.5%. Selected ICBC 2023 best-papers were invited to submit an extended version of their papers to Wiley’s International Journal of Network Management with a fast-track review process. Additionally, 5 SoK papers, 25 short papers, and 27 posters have been accepted to the conference program. Moreover, 10 demo papers were accepted. The conference program was also enriched with three panel discussions by experts selected from among the attendees and from local industries. Those panel topics on “Blockchain for Post-Quantum AI and Security: How much help it may bring?,” “CBDCs — Will they ever happen? When? In what form?,” and “Are Private Blockchains Dead?” interested, in all cases, a very large set of attendees, who participated actively in those discussions as well.

The general feedback on ICBC 2023 from the audience attending was extremely positive. Lots of words of praise and satisfaction were expressed by the attendees to the organizing team which made us happy and proud of the achievement. Valuable goodies were presented to all the attendees and the in-kind contribution of Dubai Tourism is again duly acknowledged.

The next station of the IEEE ICBC will be the beautiful city of Dublin in Ireland. We wish the organizing team success for the IEEE ICBC’24.
IEEE ComSoc Iraq Chapter Scientific Activities through First Half of 2023
by Sattar B. Sadkhan, IEEE ComSoc Iraq Chapter Chair

During the first 6 months of the year 2023, the IEEE ComSoc Iraq chapter in cooperation with IEEE Iraq section and IEEE Iraq CIS chapter participated in technically support and enhancing the organization of (7) International conferences (technically sponsored by IEEE) and many scientific workshops in many Iraqi universities. All these conferences were held in hybrid status.

The main tasks of IEEE ComSoc Iraq chapter were working as volunteers to scientifically enhances the scientific and technical organization, and attracting academics (from Iraqi universities and from outside Iraq — International universities) for enhancing the reviewing and participation in these conferences.

• These conferences are:

  9th IEC-2023 — the 9th International Engineering Conference on advances in Computer and Civil Engineering Towards Engineering Innovations and Sustainability — in Tishik University

  The International Conference of Al-Qadisyia university March 2023.

  Signing the MoU with the Technical Institute-North Technical College-Kirkuk City their conference.

  Meeting with (Soran University 0 in Erbil city at January 2023, and signing MoU for holding the International Conference at October 2023.

  Scientific Workshop in Al-Mansoor College University at June 2023.

  Signing the MoU with Academic staff of Oil Engineering Department at University of Technology at March 2023, and the conference will be held at November 2023.

  6th ICA-2023 — the 6th International Conference hold at Islamic University in Al-Najaf City at June IRAQ

  The International Conference of Al-Qadisyia university March 2023.

  Signing the MoU with Academic staff of Oil Engineering Department at University of Technology at March 2023, and the conference will be held at November 2023.

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The main academic voluntaries tasks of the members of IEEE Iraq section and IEEE Comsoc Iraq Chapter and IEEE Iraq CIS Chapter were concentrated to enhance (scientifically) the holding and choosing the best suitable (with very good quality) of the pre-accepted papers to be upload to IEEE digital explore library, and also to encourage and enhance the Iraqi Universities to go ahead in organizing (yearly) such important scientific conferences. We visited these universities many times and discussed with their conferences organizers the importance of going ahead in establishing such conferences.

Other goals have been to encourage and enhance the Iraqi Universities to go ahead in organizing (yearly) such important scientific conferences. Also, the IEEE Iraq ComSoc Chapter signed (10) local (MoU) with (10) universities to hold their International conferences in 2023.

Many others scientific activities were hold through this period, which are:

• Meeting with the Lebanese-France University in Erbil City-Kurdistan — and sign MoU to enhance the organization of about IEEE ComSoc paving the way for advancement in telecommunications and networking technology, research application, education and incubation of new ideas and finally, Engr. Abdul lateef Aliyu (Vice — President, IEEE Smart Village, Africa Working Group) who read the citation of the invited lecturer.

In November, IEEE ComSoc attended and co-sponsored Conference on Information Technology for Education and Development (ITEC) which is going to be an IEEE collaborated Annual Conference of the Academia in Information Technology Profession (AITP). The Conference aimed to bring together students, academia, industry, researchers, and government officials to discuss how information technology can further enhance education and promote national development.
As previous years, Thai ComSoc chapter joined the International Day of Light (IDL — May 16) event as the national contact node. IDL 2022 theme was set on the sustainable development with optical communications. Two invited talks designed for non-technical background audiences, were given online by large industrial firms updating their optical fiber networks and services to the public.

The opening talk entitled “Optical Communication Network for National Electricity Generating” was presented by Mr. Pornpong Chiewcharat, a senior engineer from the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). Starting from the basic of both electricity and its communication network through the services, lightwave communication in real life could be realized via this grid application as well.

Next, Mr. Puttapong Patumrattanachot, a communication engineer from recently largest TELOCS locally, Advanced Info Service Public Company Limited (AIS), illustrated optical fiber foundation for wireless communication network. Related knowledge through the contemporary services was presented in the topic of “Network foundation and AIS optical fiber services.” All optical routes of both networks covering the whole country are also shown impressively on a single national maps. Detail and videos of these talks are recorded at www.quantum-thai.org/single-post/idl-2022-thailand.

In parallel at early of the year 2022, IEEE ComSoc Thailand formally joined the campaign “Woman in Science & Engineering (WISE)” for the first time. Under the initiated WISE series 2022, inspired stories of Dr. Asanee Kawtrakul, emeritus professor in telecommunications and computer engineering field, were published monthly. Her experiences on critical thinking, decision making, and many valuable suggestions to students through young female engineers to the public, were focused and digested. Those seven popular columns are serving at www.quantum-thai.org/q-home/tags/asanee-kawtrakul.

By successfully organizing above mentioned IDL & WISE 2022, more case studies shall be extended in the further years. Introduction for the invited topic and people from the public is also welcome.