
Global Communications Newsletter

May 1997

Do You Know What APC Is?

By Domonori Aoyama, Chair, Asia Pacific Committee

The Asia Pacific Committee (APC) is one of three regional committees in ComSoc. The objectives of the APC are to promote ComSoc membership in the Asia Pacific region, and to encourage and support ComSoc members in the AP region to participate in various ComSoc technical activities. The APC is open to all ComSoc members, and anyone who is concerned about the above objectives can join the APC activities.

The AP region has about 5800 ComSoc members currently (16 percent of total ComSoc members), and it is noted that the membership increase in this region is quite high. For example, the increase rate is about 50 percent over the past five years. The technical contributions to ComSoc-sponsored conferences from this region are also rapidly increasing. 260 papers accepted for ICC and GLOBECOM held in 1988 and 1989 were submitted from the AP region, while in 1994 and 1995, 397 papers total contributed from this region were accepted. According to these statistics, the AP region is playing a more and more important role in ComSoc activities, and it is expected that ComSoc will be able to obtain more and more new members in this region from now on. APC should and can help ComSoc grow globally.

APC consists of three subcommittees. The AP Technical Subcommittee (Chair: Iwao Sasase, Japan) supports ComSoc technical activities. For example, it encourages members to promote technical sessions and tutorials at ComSoc-sponsored conferences and workshops. It has made a reviewers list which contains 69 reviewers in the AP region from a wide range of technical fields. This list is quite helpful for technical program committees of various ComSoc-sponsored conferences.

The main task of the AP Regional Affairs Subcommittee (Chair: Kee Chaing Chua, Singapore) is to maintain the APC e-mail networks for APC. There are currently two e-mail networks for active APC volunteers. One is apc_members@hornbill.ee.nus.sg. This e-mail network is useful for dissemination of information such as conference calls for papers/participation, and is often used by members to distribute various items of information useful to members of the list. The other e-mail list is apc_key_members@hornbill.ee.nus.sg, which comprises addresses of key APC officers and is used for discussions among these key members on APC issues and policies. Any ComSoc member can use these APC e-mail networks.

The AP Meeting and Conference Subcommittee (Chair: Naohisa Ohta, Japan) works to share information on international meetings and conferences held mainly in the AP region and/or organized by members in this region. It updates a conference calendar which mainly includes relevant meetings and conferences held within the region. The committee coordi-

nates the time and place of ComSoc sponsored/cosponsored regional conferences and workshops such as APCC and ISPACS if required.

APC publishes the AP Newsletter twice a year, and 10 AP Newsletters have been published so far. The Editorial Board (Editor-in-Chief: Tan Teik Kheong, Singapore) collects articles through an editor in each AP country/region, and publishes it in paper form as well as e-mail.

APC has recently opened its own Web home page linked to the ComSoc home page. Please go to <http://onlab.tas.ntt.co.jp/APC/> to get useful information on APC.

ComSoc has two regional offices, one of which is located in Singapore (Manager: Fanny Su Beh Noi, Singapore). This office is managed by the International Activities Council (IAC), but APC asks the office to help with APC activities. For example, the printing of AP Newsletters is now managed by the Singapore Office. It has also close contacts with the AP Regional Subcommittee people in Singapore who maintain the APC e-mail server.

APC usually has a regular meeting during ICC and GLOBECOM conferences. Please attend an APC meeting or join our e-mail groups to make APC more active. We expect your ideas and contributions.

Technical Committee on Signal Processing and Communication Electronics

by Trevor Clarkson, Chair,

SPCE Technical Committee

According to its charter, the Signal Processing and Communication Electronics technical committee (SPCE) sponsors papers, participates in the organization of conferences, and promotes technical workshops on those aspects of communications that pertain to the innovation, development and application of algorithms and electronic and photonic devices or subsystems for generation, processing, storage, transmission, recovery, and presentation of communications signals.

Special significance is generally placed on the description of hardware — devices, circuits, integrated circuits, and systems — and its application to communication theory.

The work of this committee is very much interdisciplinary. Collaboration exists with the IEEE Neural Networks Council, and we support the newly formed Solid State Circuits Society.

SPCE collaborates with other committees and regions in

(Continued on page 4)

Latin America Takes the Globalization Train

By Bruno S. Vianna, Geographic Conference Board Director for North and Latin America and
Chair of the Latin-American Committee

Globalization has become one of the most popular words at ComSoc. Although North America is still number one in hosting conferences and participating in ComSoc activities, there has been a significant move toward more balanced participation of other regions, which will make ComSoc stronger worldwide.

Latin America is now facing a fast transition to a whole new environment, including but not limited to telecommunications. After many years of steady monopoly, the telecommunications market is opening by large steps, bringing the challenges of a competitive environment. Privatization of state-owned telcos and partnership with foreign companies dominate the discussions at the political scene. It is already a reality in Argentina and Chile and is starting to happen in Brazil, where the government plans to fragment and sell the TELEBRÁS System next year for US\$92 billion. Thus, globalization in Latin America is also in, which means the need for removal of old barriers, integration, new services, competitiveness, and so forth — all generating lots of new interest from telcos and vendors around the world.

Latin-American participation in ComSoc activities is still low, but there is increasing engagement and organization within this dynamically changing environment. The Latin-American Committee (LAC) represents the region in ComSoc and especially the International Activities Council, chaired by the Vice President of International Affairs, Lin-shan Lee. LAC has two kinds of representatives: National Representatives from the various countries and Representatives to Technical Committees. The Brazilian Telecommunications Society was the second scientific society to sign a cooperation agreement with ComSoc as a Sister Society. The LA region was also a pioneer at establishing the first ComSoc Regional Conference, the International Telecommunications Symposium (ITS). ITS was first run by the Brazilian Telecommunications Society in 1990. ITS '90 and ITS '94, both held in Rio de Janeiro, had the support of ComSoc and were very successful, attracting 500 attendees, including many distinguished experts from several countries and a high quality of papers. ITS '94 hosted a ComSoc Operating Committee (OpCom) meeting and was also used as a first experiment on multicasting, allowing for real-time overseas remote participation using Mbone. Now as a ComSoc Regional Conference for Latin America, it is cosponsored by ComSoc, the Brazilian Telecommunications Society, and another local society or the local IEEE Chapter. It is held every two years, alternating between Brazil and other Latin American countries. The first venue outside Brazil was Acapulco, Mexico, Oct 28-31, 1996. Next will be ITS '98 in São Paulo, Brazil (Aug. 9-13). ITS 2000 is still open for proposals from outside Brazil.

GLOBECOM '99 will be another significant event hosted by the region. It will be

held in Rio de Janeiro and chaired by Prof. J. Roberto B. de Marca.

Although the above considerations indicate a clear evolution achieved in the latest years, the ComSoc globalization policy for Meetings and Conferences imply that we must go beyond that, as stated by Doug Zuckerman, Director of Meetings and Conferences, in the March issue. There are many strong technical groups that can be stimulated and are able to help host with efficiency and quality the various kinds of ComSoc conferences in a more even geographical distribution.

Please take this as a Call for your Participation in the Latin-American Committee; hosting ITS or other ComSoc conferences; identifying new candidates to become ComSoc Sister Societies; and so on. Let's go global together! Contact me at brunosv@cpqd.br.

Where Are the Reviewers?

By Andrzej Jajszczyk, Poland

We all rely on technical reviewers: editors of Communications Society's transactions, journals, and magazines, program committee members of numerous workshops and conferences — to mention only some of them. Competent and timely reviews are essential to maintain the high standards of our publications and conferences. However, year after year, it is more and more difficult to find individuals who can prepare such good reviews. I see various reasons for that. One of them is a continuous increase in the number of submitted papers. The growing population of researchers produce enormous amounts of technical articles. Anyway, the phrase "publish or perish" is still valid, and any academic advancement or chances for research grants depend mainly on one's number of publications. Another reason is a rapid increase in the number of publications covering telecommunications issues. Publishing is a profitable and noble business. All of these publishers need technical reviewers. The number of new conferences, workshops, and congresses is simply exploding.

Despite the growth of the number of people working in the area, the number of potential reviewers seems to be pretty stable. The result is quite obvious: experts are overwhelmed by dozens or even hundreds of papers they are asked to review each year. And they are simply not able to do that. Consequently, they often return the papers to the editors, forward them to their students, sometimes write superficial reviews based on a first impression rather than a thorough study of the paper, or simply ignore the editor's request. Of course, there are those rare people who always write highly professional reviews on time. How they do that? As a technical editor for *IEEE Transactions on Communications* I have often had bad experiences. Sometimes, it is better to ask younger researchers for a review. From time to time I receive excellent, in-depth comments and suggestions. But quite often, especially with interdisciplinary and complex topics, maturity and years of experience are essential in a reviewer. What to do when, after a half-year "battle" with several reviewers, an editor receives three or four sets of shallow and contradictory comments? However, the selection process may not simply be a lottery, since it would jeopardize the quality and reputation of a journal or a conference. Deep and thorough reviews based on detailed study of the literature, with careful checking of formulas, procedures, and proofs, are "rare birds" now.

All editors have their own "tricks." One of them is to mail the paper to a considerable number of experts. At least some of them will reply. Another method is to ask people who recently submitted papers to the same journal for a review. This usually works, although I doubt if the reviews received are not biased sometimes, since a negative review could limit the number of competitors for scarce space in the journal. Lists of volunteers who agree to

(Continued on page 4)

The Brazilian Telecommunications Society

By José Mauro P. Fortes, President, Brazilian Telecommunications Society

In 1983, through the efforts of several members of the Brazilian scientific community in telecommunications, the first Brazilian Telecommunications Symposium was held in Rio de Janeiro. The event was a successful one and has provided the environment for the birth of the Sociedade Brasileira de Telecomunicações — SBT (Brazilian Telecommunications Society). Since then, SBT has organized, on a yearly basis, a series of national symposia that have continuously grown in terms of attendance and quality of the presented papers. In this series of symposia, SBT has always left its seal of professional organization and care, reflected in the quality of their technical programs. These SBT national symposia have filled a gap in the wishes of the Brazilian scientific community by providing a forum for the presentation and discussion of ideas, studies, proposals and findings resulting from the involvement of this community with telecommunications matters, both nationally and worldwide. They have also provided an adequate forum for debates related to important matters like the Brazilian telecommunications industrial policy, the Brazilian “law of informatics,” which protected the national small computers national industry, and education in telecommunication. Today, they are considered one of the most important national telecommunication events in Brazil.

Recognizing the importance of having a vehicle to document important results in the field of Telecommunications, SBT decided to create, in 1986, a technical journal: the *Journal of the Brazilian Telecommunication Society*. Based on the most important criteria for quality and with the help of a highly qualified group of editors and reviewers, the journal has reached an excellent standard, and is now being prepared to widen its scope, in order to embrace the communications community in Latin America, reaching a larger number of readers and potential authors. Papers submitted to the *Journal of the Brazilian Telecommunications Society* can be written in Portuguese, English, or Spanish languages.

In 1988, the Board of Directors of the Brazilian Telecommunications Society decided to start an ambitious project: putting together the first SBT International Conference. The task was given to Prof. José Roberto de Marca, who immediately sought partnership with the most prestigious scientific society in Communications, the IEEE Communications Society. It was a successful experience: the SBT/IEEE 1990 International Telecommunications Symposium — ITS '90, held in Rio de Janeiro, was regarded by many as an excellent event. A second edition of the ITS was then held four years later and was again a very successful conference. In view of this, IEEE ComSoc, with the agreement of the Brazilian Telecommunications Society, decided to make ITS a regular series of IEEE ComSoc regional conferences. It was decided that the symposia in the series would be held every two years, and that it would alternate its location between Brazil and other Latin American countries. The third edition of ITS was then held last year in Acapulco, Mexico, and the next, ITS '98, is scheduled to take place in São Paulo, Brazil.

The cooperation between SBT and IEEE

ComSoc has increased when, in July 1995, an agreement was signed making SBT one of ComSoc's Sister Societies. This cooperation agreement concerns the participation of members of both societies in IEEE or SBT-sponsored meetings and was later complemented with a cooperative agreement on publications. In November 1996, the ComSoc Globecom/ICC Conference Board (GICB) accepted the Brazilian Telecommunications Society as a local cosponsor of the IEEE Global Telecommunications Conference, GLOBECOM, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1999. This fact attests to the continuing cooperation between the two societies.

We certainly believe that the cooperation between IEEE ComSoc and SBT is just beginning and that, in the years to come, SBT will have more to share and benefit from in its association with IEEE ComSoc.

The IEEE ComSoc Singapore Office

By Fanny Su Beh Noi

Our office is now connected to the IEEE New Jersey Oracle database; staff completed training on the database in February. We are pleased to announce that we are now able to immediately update a member's change of address directly into the master database at the member's request. Note, however, that an immediate change on the master database still requires a two-month lead time for members in the Asia Pacific to see an effective change. The master database is updated once a month with the publishing houses, and most of them preprint their mailing labels. Members should arrange forwarding of their mail from their old address for this two-month period.

We are also on INQUIRY mode for other Oracle responsibilities and are able to advise members on their membership status, subscriptions, payments, and orders placed. Call us on our ComSoc dedicated telephone line at +65-872-1955 with your inquiries regarding:

1) ComSoc Chapter Chair contacts in the Asia Pacific

2) Contacts and copies of agreements with the national societies with which ComSoc has Sister Society agreements in the Asia Pacific: the China Institute of Communications (CIC, China); Chinese Institute of Electronics (CIE, China); Chinese Institute of Electrical Engineering (CIEE, Taiwan); Institute of Electronics, Information and Communication Engineers (IEICE, Japan); The Korean Institute of Communication Sciences (KICS, Korea)

3) Section Chair contacts in the Asia Pacific

Please note the conditions under which our office will be able to provide mailing labels:

a) If the conference is a society-sponsored event, please contact, in writing, MaryAnn DeWald (m.dewald@ieee.org) in IEEE's Technical Activities Conference Services Department. She can run labels for society-sponsored events if the organizing committee chair submits the request in writing to her.

b) If the conference is region-sponsored or region cosponsored (e.g., TenCon and INTELEC '97), we can generate the mailing labels for the volunteers from our SAMIeee diskette for one-time use only. We must reiterate this one-time use to the volunteer.

c) If the region-sponsored conference needs more than one use, the organizing committee chair must forward the request in writing to Debbie Schreiber (d.schreiber@ieee.org) in Regional Activities.

Your Section should have a copy of the SAMIeee diskette for your local section membership. Contact Vera Sharoff (v.sharoff@ieee.org), Information Processing Manager for Regional Activities, to sign up for the 1997 SAMIeee diskette program if you do not have it.

If you do not have a ComSoc Chapter within your section and wish to help start one, please contact us. We will send you the Chapter Formation kit and assist you in whatever way we can.

IEEE BSS '97 2nd IEEE International Workshop on Broadband Switching Systems Taipei, Taiwan, ROC, December 3-4, 1997

The goal of this workshop is to provide an effective forum for discussing new directions, new challenges, new opportunities, and new advances on broadband switching systems, and to foster communications among researchers and engineers from both academia and industry with a common interest in improving broadband switching systems.

Scope

The primary focus of the workshop is on new and original research results of switching systems for the broadband Internet and for QoS on demand. We solicit the submission of papers that address novel, challenging, and innovative results. The topics that will be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- ATM Switching Systems
- ATM Switching Fabric
- Wireless ATM Switching
- IP/ATM
- IP Switching
- Gigabit Switching
- Gigabit Router
- Photonic Switching
- Quality of Services (QoS) Issues
- Routing and Control of Congestion, Admission, and Flow
- Alternative Approaches to Broadband Switching

- Performance Evaluation of Broadband Switching Systems
- Broadband Network Operations and Management
- ATM Field Trials
- Other Aspects of Broadband Switching

Submission

Authors are invited to submit original papers. Submissions should include the title, author name(s), author's affiliation, e-mail address, fax number, and postal address. In case of multiple authors, an indication of which author is responsible for correspondence and preparing the camera-ready paper for the proceedings should also be included. Four double-spaced copies of the manuscript, or one copy of the manuscript in PostScript format should be submitted by Friday, July 25, 1997 to:

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For more information about the workshop, please send e-mail to gskuo@imrnet.mgt.ncu.edu.tw.

Important Dates:

Paper submission deadline: July 25, 1997
Notification of acceptance: Oct. 1, 1997
Camera-ready papers due: Oct. 28, 1997

Tutorials

Proposals are solicited for tutorials. Please send your proposal by July 25, 1997 to Dr. G. S. Kuo.

Global Communications Newsletter

<http://www.comsoc.org/pubs/gcn>

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TETSUYA MIKI
Chapters Corner



A publication of the
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(Continued from page 1)

the organization of sessions in the major conferences and also workshops. Last year, SPCE members were prominent in the organization of GLOBECOM '96, ISPACS '96, and ICT '96. SPCE has representatives on the Technical Committees of many major ComSoc conferences. SPCE has recently become a cosponsor of IWANNT (International Workshop on Applications of Neural Networks to Telecommunications) which will be held in Melbourne, Australia this year.

SPCE currently has 170 members who are distributed around the world. We meet regularly at ICC and GLOBECOM, and we welcome participation from anyone who is able to attend these conferences.

SPCE has had its own home page for some time on the Web at <http://crg.eee.kcl.ac.uk/spce/spcehome.htm>, but this will be superseded by our page on the ComSoc Web site at <http://www.comsoc.org/socstr/techcom/spce/index.html>. Currently these pages are mirrors, but the ComSoc address should be viewed as the primary site in the future.

(Continued from page 2)

serve as reviewers, compiled, for example, by Communications Society's committees, are often very helpful, but they do not solve the problem entirely. I am afraid that we are in a deep crisis now. Something probably has to be changed to make the publication processes reliable and fair. Reviewing is our professional duty, but many of us seem to prefer some more profitable "duties." Anyway, it is not possible to work 24 hours a day. So, maybe paid reviews could solve the problem? It sounds awkward, but do we have other solutions?