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Member and Global Activities: Promoting ComSoc Membership Locally and Globally Interview with Nei Kato, Vice-President-MGA

By Stefano Bregni, Global Communications Newsletter Editor in Chief, Vice-President for Conferences, and Nei Kato, Vice-President for MGA

As we did already in past years, when I was serving as IEEE ComSoc Vice-President for Member Relations and Vice-President for Member and Global Activities, with this issue we begin a new series of nine interviews with the Officers of the IEEE Com-Soc Member and Global Activities Council, which will be published every month in the Global Communications Newsletter.

In this series of articles, I will introduce the Vice-President and six Directors on the Member and Global Activities Council 2018-19 (namely: Sister and Related Societies; Membership Services; AP, NA, LA, EMEA Regions) and the Chairs of the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE) and Young Professionals (YP) Standing Committees. They will present their sector activities and plans.



Opening the series, this month we begin with Nei Kato, IEEE ComSoc Vice-President for Member and Global Activities for the term 2018-19.

Nei has been a full professor with the Graduate School of Information Sciences and the Director of the Research Organization of Electrical Communication (ROEC), Tohoku University, Japan for over 20 years. He served as the Editor-in-Chief of IEEE Network (2015-2017), a Member-at-Large on the Board of Governors, IEEE Communications Society (2014-2016), the Chair of the Satellite and Space Communications Technical Committee (2010-2012) and Ad Hoc & Sensor Networks Technical Committee (2014-2015) of ComSoc. He is a Distinguished Lecturer of ComSoc and a Fellow of IEEE.

Bregni: Nei, welcome to your new position as VP MGA! You were elected in 2017 (congratulations!) and you began your two-year term in January 2018.

Kato: I am very grateful for the chance of working as VP-MGA for ComSoc. My intentions are to work closely with the other directors of MGA and under the guidance of our president and the other staff members in order to create a dynamic environment in terms of membership and global activities.

Bregni: In a few words, what will be the main focus of your

Kato: As per the responsibilities of the MGA board, recently many events and activities have been performed on a global and local scale. For example, the creation of this newsletter was significant in disseminating and spreading news and events from local chapters.

Additionally, we have the very important Distinguished Lecturer Tour, which takes our most active researchers to various

areas according to the needs of the local chapters, bringing knowledge to the local members and promoting ComSoc membership in the chapters.

Besides this, we have a Student Competition Program, the Women in Communications Engineering standing committee, and multiple awards in various regions. All these programs have already had a significant impact for advancing membership and activities of our society.

Bregni: All this sounds exciting. Is there another side of the coin?

Kato: ComSoc, as well as other academic and professional institutions in the field of communications engineering, has had trouble recently with declining numbers of members. For example, in October 2017, ComSoc had 26778 members, of which 6.2 percent were student members and 3.3 percent were graduate school members. Needless to say, these numbers are

far below what is ideal and we plan to invest resources, both financial and human, to revert

Bregni: So, are there any plans to expand ComSoc membership?

Kato: More concretely, we have two actions already being realized with such a goal in mind. First, starting this year, we will start presenting the Membership and Global Activities Contribution Award (ComSoc-MG-



Nei Kato

ACA) to volunteers who promote ComSoc membership and activities in their local chapters and manage to recruit a significant number of members.

Although we have awards to reward local chapters and the Chapter of the Year award, so far we had nothing to commend individuals for the their efforts in promoting ComSoc and recruiting members. We believe that encouraging senior members can have an impact on the local students, influencing them to join ComSoc and teaching them about the benefits of our society.

As a matter of fact, although the ComSoc-MGACA will be first awarded in September of this year, its mere announcement has already sparked some chapters into action. For example, the Xian Chapter saw a 60 percent increase in membership since January, going from eight graduate student members to 73. The Harbin Chapter had a 105 percrnt total increase, going from five graduate student members to 37. These are the kind of advancements that we expect to be created with this new award, in all chapters but especially in areas with more potential members.

Additionally, we would like to modify the way funding is allocated to local chapters. We would like to give better incentives to chapters that recruit more members, by checking their net increase in the number of members yearly through ComSoc membership statistics. Obviously, this must be done carefully, evaluating if the chapter in question is a newly created one or not, and how densely populated is the area where it is located.

Finally, I would like to say that to achieve this goal of increasing the membership of ComSoc we need to work together with other councils of ComSoc to maintain and even increase the level of our society. This means offering good pub-

IEEE ComSoc Internet of Things (IoT) Summit, Argentina, October 2017

By Ricardo A. Veiga and Gerardo Demarco, Faculty of Engineering, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Faculty of Engineering, Universidad de Buenos Aires, in collaboration with the IEEE ComSoc Argentina Chapter, organized the IEEE ComSoc Internet of Things (IoT) Summit on 25–26 October 2017.

It hosted industry practitioners, consultants, national and international policymakers from ITU, entrepreneurs and researchers. More than 200 people assisted to learn and discuss the latest IoT technologies, applications and services.

They were analyzed from various points of view (academia, industry and government), including some conferences aimed at vertical industries like e-health, smart cities and agriculture, for example. Several other panels and keynote speakers were organized, some of them in parallel, where government, regulators, ITU, and more than 20 distinguished speakers participated in interactive exchanges with the audience.

The event started with a welcome speech by Dr. Oscar M. Gonzalez, the State Undersecretary for Regulations Affaires, followed by Dr. Eduardo Levy Yeyati, Director of the Argentina 2030 program.

The event continued with a series of talks, including two specific from ComSoc: "Challenges towards Preparing for the New Generation Technologies for Internet of Things" by Dr. Joel Rodrigues (Portugal/Brazil), and "Networking for Big Data" by Dr. Nelson Fonseca (Brazil) as a part of his Distinguished Lecture Tour through South America.

Other specific panels were "Infrastructure and Connectivity: IoT vs. Spectrum Challenges" and "Cloud Platforms for IoT."



Ricardo Veiga, Nelson Fonseca, Juan Codagnone, Cherlene Rodrigues (Joel's wife), Joel Rodrigues.



Eduardo Levy Yeyati (Director of the Argentina 2030 program).



Joel Rodrigues (National Institute of Telecommunications, Inatel, Brazil).

These panels presented some of the latest hot topics about IoT technologies, applications and services. During the second day, Dr. Joel Rodrigues talked about "IoT Research and Challenges for Health applications," including some references to the state-of-the-art devices available nowadays.

In parallel, two other panels were presented: "Communications Systems for IoT" and "Regulations Like Innovation Accelerators." These two last panels were focused on the role of regulations from the industry and government points of view. Héctor Huici, State Secretary for Information and Communications Technologies, made a few closing remarks on Thursday 26 October.

During the breaks and lunch, many groups continued with Q&A to the speakers, showing that a growing interest in communications was settled after this Argentina–IEEE ComSoc Internet of Things (IoT) Summit.

Industry Leaders, Academics and Government Officers were very satisfied with these meetings, and ComSoc was set up again in their minds as a reference point in this area.



Left to right: Celedonio von Wuthenau (CICOMRA), Ricardo Veiga (UBA-IEEE ComSoc), Héctor Huici (SeTIC), Gerardo Demarco (UBA-IEEE ComSoc), Oscar González (SeTIC), Paula Córdoba (INTEL), Alejandro Adamowicz (GSMA), Jorge Cella (Microsoft), Ricardo Pérez (SeTIC).

Networking at IEEE LATINCOM 2017: Seminar on Vehicular Communications by Prof. Carlos Gutierrez at the El Salvador Chapter

By Carlos Eugenio Martínez-Cruz, El Salvador Section Chair

Last November, I attended the 9th Latin-American Conference on Communications (LATINCOM 2017) which was held in Guatemala City, Guatemala. IEEE LATINCOM was an excellent opportunity to meet researchers, professors and telecommunication practitioners.

As part of the social events, ComSoc Guatemala organized a short trip to Guatemala's most beautiful city, Antigua Guatemala. It was on that trip that many of us had the opportunity to directly talk with our colleagues. ComSoc conferences have proved to be a very good tool to connect people and to expand professional relations among its members. Many



Lecture of Carlos Gutierrez in El Salvador.



Carlos Gutierrez receiving a diploma of recognition.

future professional collaboration activities were settled there.

For instance, while we were visiting Mayan museums, I arranged a two-day seminar on vehicular communication with professor Carlos Gutierrez, from San Luis Potosi University, Mexico. Also at the same time, professor Carlos Gutierrez

established contacts with researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brigham Young University. In a nutshell, ComSoc conferences are very effective to connect members and their chapters.

During his visit to El Salvador, before the two-day seminar, on Wednesday, 21 February, Professor Carlos Gutierrez gave two talks at two different universities. The first talk was given to students at the University of El Salvador. The activi-

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Telecommunication professionals that attended the seminar of Carlos Gutierrez.

CONFERENCE REPORT

ECTI-CARD 2017: Quantum Computer for Classical Communication and Computer Engineers and a New Book

By Keattisak Sripimanwat (D.Eng), Thailand Chapter Chair

Another annual conference on applied research and development, ECTI-CARD 2017, was organized on 25–28 July at Chiang Khan (Loei province) by the ECTI Association. This 9th conference, a special talk entitled "Quantum Computer for Classical Communication and Computer



Cover of the new book.



Dr. Pichaya Tandayya (third from right) Prof. Prabhas Chongstitvatana (sitting) and some of the organizing members.

Engineers," was co-organized by the IEEE ComSoc Thailand chapter on July 27.

Surrounding in old-fashioned background of the fantastic Chiang Khan town with vintage phone decorations, the modern era of quantum computing debuted in our society.

At the beginning, Dr. Pichaya Tandayya from Prince of Songkla University (PSU) gave a short technical presentation showing the survey from the present engineering point of view. That was how software and hardware engineers should adapt to the new (quantum) comer. Then, an open discussion was fol-

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lowed and chaired by Prof. Prabhas Chongstitvatana, a former ECTI president.

After updating with contemporary local and worldwide R&D, various questions and answers from almost 20 participants were shown interestingly. In particular, it was discussed how future courses for both communication and computer engineering schools should be re-designed and how students, including faculty members, have to move along. In addition, the suggested solution to fight with FRAUD or fabricated publications mentioning "quantum mechanics," was introduced as well.

Moreover at the end of this event, the first edition of the Thai Wuantum Computer book was announced. That publication covers information started from the national computational history through a (loosing) lesson-learn on adoption of the supercomputer in Thailand, to the collection of fundamental quantum computing chapters from six Thai scholars who study at the leading institutes worldwide. Focusing on the general readers, it was written in a storytelling style with no need of technical background. It is serving free of charge for both printed and online versions.

Sound recording with selected presentation and pictures of this colorful talk are already composed into two videos at Q-Thai.org (Q-Clips menu). Widespread distribution of the book and related information for public realization is consequently expected after the conference. Due to the past national experiences in previous high risk and lost investment in many telecommunication and IT industries, a manifesto by the Thai Quantum Information (Q-Thai) Forum as being a "smart purchaser" for the future quantum IT system, is thus optimistically targeted and first mentioned in this conference. The ew IT era is coming!



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lications, good conferences, good local and global activities, and a good connection with the industry. These steps will help establish ComSoc even further as a benchmark for achieving a good career and creating relevant academic research, especially among students. We also would like to improve the synergy between chapters, allowing the exchange of state-of-the-art technologies, events, awards, and lecturers.

I look forward to working with all the members of ComSoc to make it an excellent venue for the growth of members. We, the MGA council and I, will listen to you, make use of your strong support and deliver only our best efforts.

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ty was organized by the Universidad de El Salvador's Students ComSoc chapter. More than 60 students attended the event. For most of them this was their first exposure to a ComSoc professional member, and probably to a foreign speaker. The event counted with ComSoc student chapter from Universidad de El Salvador. They invited other students and looked for facilities to hold the meeting.

The same day, later in the afternoon, a similar talk was given at the Universidad Tecnologica de El Salvador. There is great expectations at this university about having new members, creating a new student branch and having Computer Society and ComSoc student chapters. Finally, at the end of the day, we still found time to visit Salvadoran section members. They were having a meeting preparing their next regional conference, the 38th edition of CONCAPAN, the Central America and Panama IEEE Conference.

Once again, personal interaction among ComSoc members proved to be very fruitful. In less than half an hour, professor Gutierrez offered help to CONCAPAN's technical committee. That help could be in the form of paper reviewers. In just one day many professional interactions were developed. Several institutional cooperation activities were planned.

The two-day seminar took place 22-23 February 2017. Twenty-six professionals attended the seminar. There were representatives from many different places from the telecommunication sector. Thirty percent came from industry, another thirty percent from the public sector, and forty percent from universities. Very few events in the daily life of our professional sector have been able to put together so many and so diverse telecommunication professionals. The seminar also helped to cement relationships among members.

Participants in the seminar showed interest in intelligent transportation systems. Professor Carlos Gutierrez explained that a further step forward toward the development of vehicular communication systems has come recently in the form of an amendment to the IEEE 802.11 standard. This amendment is referred to as IEEE 802.11p. The WiFi version of this standard was well known among participants which made the seminar more interesting. To illustrate these topics several simulations were presented and some of them were developed on the fly. This combination of lectures and simulation proved to be very interesting.