



IACAP Newsletter

The Newsletter for the **International Association for Computing and Philosophy**

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IACAP Editors

Ron Barnette, Luciano Floridi

IACAP Executive Committee

Luciano Floridi (President), Marvin Croy (Vice-President), Ron Barnette (Information Secretary), Robert Cavalier (President Ex-Officio) Susan Stuart and Philip Brey (Regional Directors of European CAP, ECAP), Charles Ess (Organizational Secretary), Soraj Hongladarom (Director of Asian-Pacific CAP, APCAP), Selmer Bringsjord (Regional Director of North-America CAP, NACAP).

Welcome to *IACAP*, the electronic Newsletter for the International Association for Computing and Philosophy (www.ia-cap.org).

In this issue of *IACAP Newsletter*:

- President's Message
- News about members' publications and projects
- Upcoming conferences and calls for presentation
- IACAP Executive Committee Minutes
- ECAP 2007 Report
- NACAP 2007 Report
- Membership Fee Invoice

Please send all relevant announcements that you wish to have included in future issues of *IACAP Newsletter* to Ron Barnette, at rbarnett@valdosta.edu. Note that we reserve the right to edit all materials received. Back issues of the *IACAP Newsletter* are available at the IACAP Website: www.ia-cap.org

President's Message

Dear Members of IACAP,

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of responsibility that I wish to thank you and the Executive Committee for the renewed vote of confidence.

You may recall that last year, during NACAP 2006, Marvin Croy and I were elected on an interim basis and for twelve months as Vice-President and President, following the resignation of the previous President, Jon Dorbolo. It was a rather intense commitment, enjoyable and rewarding, if demanding. Last August, the year was roughly over and it was important, for the well-being of the Association, that Marvin and I should step down, and that we could run a normal election, following the constitution, and hence, finally, get back to "business as usual". We went through the established procedure, nominations were received, and I'm glad to say that Martin Croy and I were both confirmed as Vice-President and President respectively.

The program I presented for my nomination was, I hope, ambitious but not unrealistic. Apart from being involved with the usual business, I proposed, if elected, that I would pursue the following priorities (not necessarily in the order of presentation):

1) forge a fruitful link with INSEIT (the International Society for Ethics and Information Technology <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SOIS/cipr/inseit.html>). It seems to me quite crucial that we attract as many human, intellectual and financial resources as possible, if both groups are to keep flourishing. Things have been going rather well during the past year. We have achieved several goals, and I'm happy to report that IACAP looks healthier than ever. We even have a few dollars in our account. However, things like research (and therefore publications) quality, international reach, concentration of meetings, wider membership, higher academic recognition, and less dispersion of efforts are among the advantages that we could enjoy by having a closer relation with INSEIT. We have already begun by coordinating the meetings that will take place in Europe in 2009.

2) launch the official IACAP journal. The Executive Board would like to see *Philosophy Computing and Information* (PCI) become a reality and we are currently talking to several publishers. The journal will cover the topics usually covered by our meetings and serve our

community at large. If we wish to attract the best kind of research and new minds, a venue like PCI will be precious. We already have a strong case to make, thanks to our meetings (an already rich source of papers) and international membership.

3) adopt proactive strategies in order to encourage the participation of graduate students to our meetings. The prizes are already an excellent instrument. If some resources should become available, we could think of various ways of sponsoring graduate participation and research. If any member has any suggestion I would be delighted to hear about it.

4) create a new position in the Executive Board whose main task would be funds raising. It may sound wishful thinking at the moment, but I believe this is the way forward.

5) widen the internationalization of IACAP in several geographic areas: Germany would be a great resource for ECAP; China, Japan and India are all great opportunities for APCAP; NACAP might be exported to Canada; the whole South-America (but also Mexico) might become involved in L(atin)A(merican)-CAP; and enough forces and colleagues might be identified in Africa (for example in Morocco, Egypt and South Africa) to organise a regional meeting there as well. I would like to see the Association being proactive on these fronts.

This is all, and probably a lot for a single message. I look forward to any comments you might wish to share.

A few words now on another, very important development. Susan Stuart's term, as Director of ECAP, also came to an end in August. Again, nominations were received and a new election took place. I'm very pleased to say that Phil Brey was voted as the new ECAP Director. It might seem formulaic to express profound gratitude to Susan for her work and good wishes to Phil for his new commitment, but in both cases the words are sincere and felt. Susan played a key role in launching and shaping CAP in Europe. We shall miss her participation, though the good news is that she has agreed to remain in charge until the next ECAP 2008 in Montpellier, thus helping Phil to settle in as the new Director. Phil is an old acquaintance to members of the Association and needs no introduction. He has plenty of international experience and all the capacities to be a worthy successor of Susan. We are lucky to have him on board.

Finally, and once again, it is a pleasure to be able to report on the several successful activities of our Association.

You will find in this issue the reports about ECAP 2007 and NACAP 2007. Let me remind you that the next three meetings are APCAP 2007, which just took place (The Third

Asia-Pacific Computing and Philosophy Conference, November 2-4, 2007, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, www.stc.arts.chula.ac.th/APCAP2007/); NACAP 2008, which will be hosted by Indiana University; and ECAP 2008, which will be in Montpellier (France). We hope to see you there.

Membership is growing, but I hope you will consider the opportunity to support IACAP financially. We rely on volunteers, but some expenses are inevitable and IACAP needs your help. As usual, you will find a Membership Fee Invoice at the end of the Newsletter. The PayPal system makes membership payments extremely simple (<http://www.ia-cap.org/membership.php>).

In this issue you will find news about other relevant conferences and call for papers, members' publications and achievements. Please help us to build our community by sharing information about your work. Do not let understatement and shyness be an obstacle. We wish to know about what you are doing. Just write a note to Ron Barnette, at rbarnett@valdosta.edu.

Luciano Floridi
President, IACAP

News about Members' Publications and Projects

From Muhammad Aurangzeb Ahmad, Dep't of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities:

I am currently compiling a bibliography of Philosophy of Information which will be relevant to the group in general. Hopefully it will be ready by the end of September. Here is the URL: <http://www.cs.umn.edu/~mahmad/poi/>

From Sebastian Sequoiah-Grayson, University of Oxford, Lecturer in Philosophy - St. Anne's College, Junior Research Associate - IEG, Computing Laboratory, D.Phil. Candidate - Faculty of Philosophy, Balliol College, OX1 3BJ, Oxford, UK:

I thought that the membership might be interested in the course on Philosophy of Technology I put together a while back. Essay questions and reading lists may be found here:

http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ball1834/teaching_ethics_of_technology.shtml

Relevant publications and presentations:

"The Metaphilosophy of Information", *Minds and Machines* (forthcoming);

Successful application for venue donation to the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford, for the support of the First Workshop in the Philosophy of Information and Logic, November 3-4, 2007, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford. The confirmed venue is The Ryle Room, The Philosophy Centre, 10 Merton Street, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford.

(with Luciano Floridi): Successful application to Weibe van der Hoek, editor of the Knowledge, Rationality, and Action series of *Synthese*, for a KRA issue to be dedicated to the proceedings of the First Workshop on the Philosophy of Information and Logic, 3 - 4 November.

From Susan Stuart and Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic

Computation, Information, Cognition – The Nexus And The Liminal, Stuart S., and Dodig-Crnkovic G. eds. (2007), Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

<http://www.c-s-p.org/Flyers/Computation--Information--Cognition--The-Nexus-and-the-Liminal.htm>

The book is a selection of papers presented at E-CAP 2005 conference held at Mälardalen University, Sweden, <http://www.idt.mdh.se/ECAP-2005/>

More information is available at : <http://www.idt.mdh.se/ECAP-2005/news.html>

From the book cover:

Computation, Information, Cognition - The Nexus and the Liminal

Edited by Gordana Dodig Crnkovic and Susan Stuart

Written by world-leading experts, this book draws together a number of important strands in contemporary approaches to the philosophical and scientific questions that emerge when dealing with the issues of computing, information, cognition and the conceptual issues that arise at their intersections. It discovers and develops the connections at the borders and in the interstices of disciplines and debates. This volume presents a range of essays that deal with the currently vigorous concerns of the philosophy of information, ontology creation and control, bioinformation and biosemiotics, computational and post-computation approaches to the philosophy of cognitive science, computational linguistics, ethics, and education.

Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic is a Senior Lecturer in Computer Science at the University of Mälardalen, Sweden. Her primary research interests are in computing and philosophy, and philosophy of information. Her background is in theoretical physics; she has a degree in computer science, and teaches on formal languages and automata theory, research methodology, theory of science and professional ethics. She has published on the unified paninformational/pancomputational theory, information and computation semantics, and computer and professional ethics.

Susan Stuart is a Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. Her primary research interests are in the philosophy of mind, Kant's epistemology and metaphysics, and developing a notion of kinaesthetic imagination. She has published on the application of Kant's transcendental psychology to contemporary issues in cognitive science, on deception, theories of mind and autism, on the conditions for conscious agency, and on the binding problem and the imagination.

From Samir Chopra and Scott D. Dexter:

Samir Chopra and Scott D. Dexter. *Decoding Liberation: The Promise of Free and Open Source Software*. New York, NY: Routledge, New Media and Cyberculture Series, 2007.

<http://www.sci.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~sdexter/DL.html>

Software is more than instructions for computing machines: it enables (and disables) political imperatives and policies. Nowhere is this potential for radical social and political change more apparent than in the practice and movement known as free software. Free software makes the knowledge and innovation of its creators publicly available. This liberation of code—celebrated in free software's explicatory slogan "Think free speech, not free beer"—is the foundation, for example, of the GNU/Linux phenomenon.

In *Decoding Liberation*, we have tried to provide a synoptic perspective on the relationships between free software and freedom. We started out by asking, "What is the emancipatory potential of free software and how is it manifested?" and ended up focusing on five main themes: free software's reworking of economic concepts such as property and production,

the ethical import of free software for communities and individuals, the facilitation of creativity, the objectivity of computing as a scientific practice, and the role of software in a cyborg world. While "open source" continues to be the focus of business hype, we argue that the truly exciting phenomenon is free software, which promises to transform not only technology and business but society as well.

Contents:

- Chapter 1: Free Software and Political Economy
- Chapter 2: The Ethics of Free Software
- Chapter 3: Free Software and the Aesthetics of Code
- Chapter 4: Free Software and the Scientific Practice of Computer Science
- Chapter 5: Free Software and the Political Philosophy of the Cyborg World

From Susan Stuart:

“From Agency to Apperception: Through Kinaesthesia to Cognition and Creation,” in a special issue of *Ethics and Information Technology*.

Upcoming Conferences and Calls for Presentation

E-CAP 2008 Conference Announcement

The International Association for Computing and Philosophy (<http://ia-cap.org>) is pleased to announce this first call for papers for its 2008 European Computing and Philosophy Conference which will take place at the Laboratoire d'Informatique, de Robotique et de Microélectronique de Montpellier, France, June 16-18, 2008.

E-CAP 2008@LIRMM, France, June 16-18, 2008

<http://www.lirmm.fr/ECAP08/index.php>

Conference Chair: Jean Sallantin <js@lirmm.fr>

E-CAP 2008 is generously supported by CNRS, Province Languedoc/Roussillon, University Montpellier II

IMPORTANT DATES

January 21, 2008	Submission of extended abstracts
March 17, 2008	Notification of acceptance
April 30, 2008	Early registration deadline
June 16-18, 2008	Conference

GENERAL INFORMATION

From Monday 16 to Wednesday 18 June 2008 the Sixth International European Conference on COMPUTING AND PHILOSOPHY will be held on the Campus of the University for Science and Technology, Montpellier, France.

PROGRAM

Continuing the foci of the E-CAP conferences (beginning in Glasgow, 2003), ECAP'08 will deal with all aspects of the "computational turn" that has emerged over the past several decades, and continues to expand and develop as a result of the multiple interactions between philosophy and computing.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

1. Igor Aleksander Imperial college London UK Virtual Phenomenology
2. Jean-Yves Beziau Université de Neuchatel Switzerland : in the research area - "Intersections" - work at the crossroads of logic, epistemology, philosophy of science
3. Jean-Pierre Dupuy Stanford & CREA in the research area : Ethical and Political Dimensions of ICTs in Globalization

RELEVANT RESEARCH AREAS

We invite papers that address all topics related to computing and philosophy, including cross- and interdisciplinary work that explores the computational turn in new ways. Hence, the following is intended to be suggestive, but not exclusive:

- Philosophy of Computer Science
- Ontology (Distributed Processing, Emergent Properties, Formal Ontology, Network Structures, etc)
- Computational Linguistics
- Global Information Infrastructures
- Philosophy of Information and Information Technology (Including: Information as structure; Semantic information)
- Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Problem of Consciousness and Cognition
- Computer-based Learning and Teaching Strategies and Resources & The Impact of Distance Learning on the Teaching of Philosophy and Computing
- IT and Gender Research, Feminist Technoscience Studies
- Information and Computing Ethics
- Biological Information, Artificial Life, Biocomputation
- New Models of Logic Software
- "Intersections" - e.g., work at the crossroads of logic, epistemology, philosophy of science and ICT/Computing, such as Philosophy of AI
- Ethical and Political Dimensions of ICTs in Globalization

SUBMISSION OF PAPERS

Authors should submit an electronic version of an extended abstract (total word count approximately 1000 words). The file should also contain a 300 word abstract that will be used for the conference web site/booklet.

To submit papers visit <http://www.lirmm.fr/ECAP08/submission.php>

The extended abstract submission deadline is Friday 21st January 2008.

For information about paper submission and the program that is not available on the conference web site (<<http://www.eu-cap.org/>>), please contact the Conference Chair.

ACCOMMODATION

To book accommodation, please visit the conference web site:

<http://www.lirmm.fr/ECAP08/accomodation.php>

NA-CAP Conference Announcement and CFP

The International Association for Computing and Philosophy (<http://ia-cap.org>) is pleased to announce this first call for papers for its 2008 North American Conference to be held July 10th – 12th at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

This year's conference theme addresses the limits of computation. As such, individual sessions will ask questions that range over several problem domains where computers and computation are having an impact. Possible questions include: Are there limits to automatic programming? Is quantum computing subject to the same limits as Turing machine computation? Is it possible to build an ethical machine? How do computers facilitate learning? To what extent is the computational metaphor helpful or harmful for describing cognition? How might the capacity of computers to create elaborate visualization techniques enhance cognition? What are the implications of experiments run in virtual worlds like Second Life? Can a musical or literary composition written by a computer be considered a work of art? To what extent, does computer networking enhance or impede the achievement of democratic ideals? What is the overall impact of social networking on our interpersonal relationships and social practices?

We welcome submissions for papers, panels and demonstrations of computing and philosophy applications. Papers and demonstrations will be allotted 30 minutes including time for questions. 90-minute slots are available for panels and can be divided as the panelists see fit.

For papers, please limit submission length to 3,000 words, keeping in mind that the IACAP discourages participants from reading their papers to the audience. (Many presenters prepare slides using PowerPoint or some other software package. However, these need not be submitted with your original paper.) Include also a 250-word abstract. If you wish your paper to be reviewed blindly, please make sure that it is devoid of all identifying marks, except for those on a cover page.

The IA-CAP discourages "show-and-tell" demonstrations, but welcomes submissions that show a new and interesting application of computers to philosophy. Submissions in this category should consist of a 1,500-word abstract outlining what is innovative about the application and the questions pertinent to philosophy that your demonstration will raise.

For panels, please submit a 1,000-word summary of the panel as a whole, along with 300 to 500-word abstracts for each of its various components.

The deadline for submissions is February 1st, 2008. Details will be sent in a separate CFP sometime in early December, 2007. They will also be posted to the IACAP website at <http://ia-cap.org> (follow the appropriate conference link) and mailed to the IACAP-announce mailing list. (See <http://ia-cap.org/maillinglist.php> to join.)

The 2008 North American Computing and Philosophy Conference is graciously sponsored by the Cognitive Science Program and the Department of Philosophy at Indiana University, Bloomington.

IACAP Executive Committee Minutes, 26 and 28 July, 2007

The IACAP Executive Committee met during the NA-CAP conference in Chicago at the Loyola University Water Tower Campus. The official minutes of that meeting follow.

Members Present: Ron Barnette, Selmer Bringsjord, Marvin Croy, Luciano Floridi, Susan Stuart.

26 July

1. President Floridi brought the meeting to order and welcomed the Committee.
2. Topic: NACAP 2008. Discussion on next year's NACAP conference site was wide-ranging, and included concerns about moving too often to new locations, the need to encourage continued and new participation, to broaden 'North American' regions, and to engage forward-looking thinking for NACAP 2009. Possible sites for 2008 were discussed. It was agreed that we would move ahead with a possible plan to secure University of California, San Diego as a host institution, in light of earlier discussions by Selmer Bringsjord with Mara Harrell (who would be further contacted), and that a possible return to Chicago for 2009 would be explored, given this convenient and rich location. It was also mentioned that a Mexico contact person for a possible future Mexico NACAP site could be invited to the UCSD meeting.
3. Topic: IACAP Awards. Two awards were discussed: the new ECAP Ada Lovelace Award, which Susan Stuart described, and the NACAP Covey Award. The matter of the process for making such awards was discussed, and it was agreed that these regional IACAP awards would be handled by regional directors with their respective Steering Committees' active involvement as they articulate the selection procedures, criteria and review processes.
4. Topic: IACAP Constitution. Marvin Croy's important assistance was acknowledged; updates, corrections and changes in the Constitution, which reflect current wording, were

discussed, and it was noted that basically all was done and will be posted on the IACAP website soon.

5. Topic: ECAP 2008. Susan Stuart discussed some possible keynote speakers for the June 2008 conference, which is ongoing. Progress continues.
6. Topic: IACAP Elections. It was agreed that Secretary Charles Ess will be contacted to issue a membership call for nominations for IACAP President and Vice President, as these election cycles continue. Nominations for President are due now, and Charles' note to the membership will clarify this, as outlined in the Constitution, according to Marvin Croy.
7. Topic: Expansion of IACAP. A wide-ranging discussion transpired which included plans by Luciano to meet with others to discuss possible CAP-related workshops/meetings in Brazil, Mexico and Japan. It was agreed that special attention will be paid to encourage more graduate student participation in future CAP conferences. Ideas included special calls for graduate student presentations, IACAP Newsletter items, and the return to graduate student tracks at CAP meetings. It was agreed that the graduate track would be organized "horizontally", if parallel sessions are needed, and not "vertically", that is parallel to other sessions.

The hour-long meeting was adjourned.

28 July

Topic: IACAP Journal. Luciano gave a summary report on feedback received from presses at Cambridge, Oxford and Springer. The former was encouraging, but the latter two were not. Negotiations are ongoing. A broad discussion followed, which included thoughts about how such a journal is indeed unique and that the project should be pursued. Luciano outlined ideas for establishing a Journal Advisory Board and an Editorial Board of high quality, and stated that he would email a list of possible names and ideas for further discussion. Questions were raised concerning the role of editors, whether there would be an online archived copy of the journal, and print-quality reputable publishers for further contacts.

The 45-minute meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Barnette

ECAP 2007 Conference Report by the Regional Director

E-CAP07 Conference Report for IACAP

The fifth European Computing and Philosophy conference (ECAP07) was held at the University of Twente, The Netherlands from the 21-23 June, 2007. The Conference Chair was Philip Brey, and the local organisation was carried out for the second year running by, the enormously

capable, Johnny Søraker who was more than ably joined this year by Katinka Waelbers. In addition there was an international Programme Committee who assisted in the consideration of conference submissions and the final selection of the many excellent papers with which we engaged over the three days.

We were welcomed to the Conference by Philip Brey, to the University by the Rector of the University, Henk Zijm, and to another ECAP meeting, organised under the auspices of the International Association for Computing and Philosophy, by Luciano Floridi, President (IACAP).

Jeroen van den Hoven, Socrates Chair, Department of Philosophy, Delft University of Technology, open the presentations in style by giving the first keynote address, his topic: The Ethics of Wideware Engineering. We were similarly girded into action on each of the next mornings by the keynote speakers Mark Bedau, Professor of Philosophy, Reed College, and Giovanni Boniolo, Professor of Philosophy, Università Degli Studi di Padova. Mark spoke on the deep open question that is the creativity of evolution, and Giovanni on empirical databases, networks and the logical formalisation of scale-free networks. This kind of preparation for the day beats a double espresso!

Apart from our international keynote speakers we had over a hundred participants from the world over and all keen to get into lively discussions at every coffee-break, lunch, and dinner opportunity. The range of topics and tracks was very wide, covering everything from IT, Cultural Diversity and Technoscience Studies, Ontology, Philosophy of Computer Science, Philosophy and the Ethics of Robotics, Information and Computing Ethics, Computer-based Learning, IT and Globalization, Philosophy of Information and Information Technology, Computational and Post-Computational Approaches to the Mind, and the ever-invaluable Intersections.

Since it would contravene the law of excluded middle for me to attend more than one of the parallel sessions at one time, I can give you only a flavour of how the paper presentations proceeded. Philip Brey opened the first Information and Computing Ethics session with a discussion of the differentiation of a computer ethics of the right and the good, and he was followed by another very interesting presentation though this time from Annamaria Carusi (Oxford University) on the distinction between fundamental and derived trust in Internet-enable scientific practice. From there I moved to another session to hear Margit Pohl (Vienna University of Technology) on the vexing question of the under-representation of women in computer science. No easy answers were forthcoming but I did discover the rather surprising statistic that only 28% of Israeli female high school students went on into Computer Science as opposed to 61% of Arab female high school students.

After a brief lunch and snatched conversations were straight into the next sessions and I opted to go to hear Gianmarco Veruggio (President, Scuola di Robotica, and Senior Research Scientist, Istituto di Elettronica e di Ingegneria dell'Informazione e delle Telecomunicazioni) talk about the social implications of robotics. Unlike a great many roboticists, who encourage us to believe that robot consciousness is just around the corner if not already solved, Gianmarco argued that it was premature to consider robot consciousness, free-will, love, dignity and emotions. With a shift in domain this was followed by an imaginative joint presentation from Edward H. Spence and

Katinka Waelbers (University of Twente) on ethics in the virtual world. I really didn't think Katinka's vivacity could be topped but it was a close run thing with Huma Shah's (University of Reading) splendidly spirited presentation on "Turing Test: Mindless Game? - A Reflection on the Loebner Prize". Huma's knowledge of the test and the Loebner Prize in particular is especially privileged because her co-author is Kevin Warwick who has been a Member of the Loebner Prize Committee, Science Museum, London. As always when there is mention of the Turing Test in the hearing of Philosophers, Psychologists and Computer Scientists there was vociferous debate. All of which was nicely rounded off by Bastian Fischer's (University of Saarland/IFOMIS) calming presentation on the intellectually demanding topic of "Phenomenal Consciousness: Sensorimotor Contingencies and the Constitution of Objects".

What can only be described as a sensational first day of the meeting was brought to its conclusion with an excursion to Twickel Castle - which was very beautiful even in the accompanying downpour - and a feast of everything delicious at a local restaurant.

The second day was just as much fun kicking off with a panel discussion on The Future of Artificial Intelligence, organised by Jordi Vallverdú (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) with Paul van der Vet (University of Twente), Mark Bedau, Susan Stuart, Anton Nijholt (University of Twente), and Thomas Roth-Berghofer (University of Kaiserslautern). Everyone agreed that a lot more time for questions would have been needed if all the issues raised were to have been addressed adequately.

The next parallel sessions got off to an exciting start with Luciano Floridi (Oxford/Bari/Hertfordshire) engaging us with a discussion of the philosophical implications of avatars; Chris Bull (Manchester Metropolitan University) providing a fascinating presentation on the ethics of e-commerce with a special emphasis on the issues of anonymity, accessibility, and interactivity of e-gambling; Ray Turner (University of Essex) on whether set theory could be considered harmful; Jean Sallantin (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) on how an examination of dialectical interaction can produce an epistemology of computer science; and a marvellously amusing and interesting presentation on programs as mathematical objects by Alton F. Sanders (Miami University).

This had already felt like a pretty full day but there were two more sessions and twenty papers to come before we were to assemble for the conference dinner in the University's Faculty Club.

Had I not been time-tabled to chair the Intersections track choosing which session to attend would have proved a very hard decision. I am sure that where-ever I would have landed I would have had a stimulating time and, as it was, I got to hear some very interesting work by Andrew Basden (University of Salford) on developing a framework for understanding information systems and information communication technology. Actually, Andrew had the splendid honour of introducing the audience, including some Netherlanders, to the work of the Dutch juridical scholar and philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd. Andrew's presentation was followed by an examination of the nature of 'virtual knowledge' by Lars-Erik Janlert (Umea University). Virtual knowledge is defined, by Lars-Erik, as that which is derived through the senses but not about physical objects, and it was distinguished from real knowledge, that which is acquired through the active sensuous contact with a material object, and factual knowledge, that which is acquired

through hearsay or reasoning. Plenty of interesting discussion ensued concerning degrees of materiality and the murky territory between the perceived and the merely conceived. Jordi Vallverdú gave the last presentation of this session about synthesising emotions in a non-natural environment he refers to as 'The Panic Room'. Much of the ensuing discussion was on the nature of emotions, the anthropomorphism of artificial environments, and whether or not empathy could count as an emotion properly understood.

At this point we could all have done with an injection of caffeine but we had to make do with a brief pit-stop and then into the last session of the day. I wouldn't say that the pace slowed in any way but it was a very different set of papers, for now, in the Philosophy of Computer Science session we had a very entertaining presentation by Selmer Bringsjord (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) on defining a square. I don't think this had been his intention at the outset, but it was beautifully executed! In a characteristically buoyant mood Amnon Eden (University of Essex) talked to us about the three paradigms of computer science: rationalist, scientific, and technocratic, and the quite distinct methodological, epistemological and ontological assumptions made by each. Amnon's dynamism is definitely a force for the good, especially when nearing the end of a long and intellectually demanding day!

The close of the second day's proceedings was left to Tim Colburn (University of Minnesota) who spoke about the use of metaphors as providing not just abstraction but also informational enrichment in computer science. However, to start us off he gave us a poem which, I believe, all San Franciscans recognise instantly:

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

-- Carl Sandburg

On the final day I was chairing the Computational and Post-Computational Approaches to the Mind track all the way. Proceedings began with Marcin Milkowski (Polish Academy of Sciences) and his paper on how embodiment affects the symbol grounding problem. The perennial problem remains: how is the semantical derived from the non-semantical, and Marcin's not uncontroversial solution is that we determine the proper inner architecture and the agent's capacity to act. The result, of course, lively questions and discussion! István Danka (University of Leeds) followed on with some very interesting work on social externalism and scale free network models of the mind, all of which he, very helpfully for a novice like me, compared with random graph models. It was really quite intriguing stuff, especially the talk of social relations as scale-free networks. The first morning session was drawn to a close by Lukasz Piwek, an undergraduate from the University of Glasgow giving his first conference presentation. He did a splendid job with a paper entitled "The Dynamic Representation of Reality and of Our Self between Real and Virtual Worlds". His concern is with what changes in the cognitive system when it moves between a cognitively open environment - the real world - to a cognitively closed

environment - a virtual world. It is work that is ongoing and will probably take Lukasz into his Post-Graduate degree.

After a brief break for coffee we reconvened to hear Hugo Gravato Marques (University of Essex) speaking about creating architectures for functional imagination. Hugo defines imagination as the purposeful manipulation of something which isn't there, and in physiological terms as the rehearsal of bodily sensation. It's certainly possible to agree with his definition and, from my own work in which I try to develop a notion of kinaesthetic or muscular imagination, I agree with his physiological claim; however, it is much harder to agree with his claim that we can't have imagination without imagery. Omar Rosas (University of Twente) was next up and gave us a super presentation on the ontological status - the ecoglogical/representational structure - of virtual environments (VE) with VEs conceived as epistemic artefacts. He began by introducing us to Marc Augé's work on non-places, for example, ATMs, Second Life, airports, and so on, but then claimed that VEs are more than "points of passage" marked by ephemeral relationships, especially if they are immersive environments with high-interactivity. We had one last presentation before lunch, this time from Filippo Barra (Universita degli Studi di Siena) on extending the scope of Hutchin's remarks on how human cognition is in a fundamental sense a cultural and social process to Turing's work.

Now in our run down to the end of the third day of a very busy and stimulating conference we had two last presentations in the Computational and Post-Computational Approaches to the Mind track. The first was from Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic (University of Mälardalen and host of the marvellous ECAP05 conference in Sweden) who presented on how we might conceive of naturalizing epistemology through info-computationalism. And, finally, for my conference experience I chaired Carl Christoph Claussen's (University of Vienna) paper on how we might devise a cybernetic ontology as a constructive epistemology. Both Gordana's and Carl's papers were wonderfully constructive and imaginative ways to end a third excellent day.

After a brief closing session we then had only enough energy to go to the bar and have a final drink together.

All in all, it was a really super experience to be, once more among friends, at the Drienerburgh Hotel on the beautiful and peaceful campus of the University of Twente. I did wish I could attend more of the papers but that's always the way and should not be the source of disappointment since we had, yet again, the opportunity to bring so many lively minds together in a convivial atmosphere for three more days of enrichment. For this we must thank Philip Brey, Johnny Søraker, and Katinka Waelbers.

ECAP08 will take place at the Montpellier, with Jean Sallantin as the conference Chair. The anticipated dates are the 12-14 June 2008.

Susan A. J. Stuart
Regional Director E-CAP
University of Glasgow

NACAP 2007 Report by the Regional Director

Program Director Tony Beavers (Professor of Philosophy/Director of Cognitive Science, The University of Evansville, Indiana) wrote:

Matt Butcher wrote a very nice piece on this past NA-CAP for Linux.com, which you can find at <http://www.linux.com/feature/118426>.

His characterization of the IACAP as a philosophical group with something of importance to say was well supported and articulated.

Thanks, Matt!

Report of the NACAP 2007 conference:

The 2007 North American Computing and Philosophy conference was held at the Water Tower campus of Loyola University in downtown Chicago this past July. The theme for the conference was Open Access Publication and Free and Open Source Software. Keynote speakers Richard Stallman and Peter Suber spoke appropriately on different aspects of the theme.

Richard Stallman, founder of the GNU Project and president of the Free Software Foundation, delivered a lecture titled "Free Software in Ethics and in Practice" in which he argued along expected lines that there were negative ethical consequences implicit in the notion of proprietary software. His talk met with both extreme support and extreme opposition in the Q&A, fostering a lively discussion that, according to some, may have transgressed the bounds of meaningful academic dialogue. For those unfamiliar with the debate, however, decent arguments were aired on both sides, as the central areas of disagreement became clear. In this regard, the event was successful; indeed, it invited neophytes into a long-standing debate on the "thou shalt nots" of the software business.

Peter Suber, Senior Researcher at the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition and the Open Access Project Director at Public Knowledge, spoke on "What Is Open Access to Research?" By contrast to Stallman's talk, Suber presented an empirical argument concerning the facts of academic journal publication that slowly emerged into an ethical and pragmatic argument in favor of open access publication for journal articles, side-stepping the question of book publication. When the evidence had been laid out, there was generally no room for critique; and the conference attendees seemed to be in universal agreement about the importance and viability of open access publication for journals.

The conference also included several other components dedicated to the conference theme. Three panel sessions were devoted to it, including a panel on the "Ethical and Legal Implications of Software Design" and another featuring the keynote speakers mentioned above joined by Selmer Bringsjord, who took a position against Stallman, and Matt Butcher, who acted as panel chair. Three sessions were dedicated to "Cognitive Science, AI, and Robotics," and another two to

"Information and Computer Ethics." The conference also featured sessions on electronic resources for teaching and scholarship, and a special double-session on "A Global Course in Computers and Philosophy," arranged by Peter Boltuc. Additionally, Rory Smead was presented with "The Brian Michael Goldberg Memorial Award" for outstanding achievement by a graduate student. The award was given for his paper, "The Evolution of Cooperation in the Centipede Game with Finite Populations," which Mr. Smead read in a special session for the Goldberg Award at the conference.

The facilities were generously supplied by Loyola University and were more than adequate for the task. The auditorium was comfortable. For concurrent sessions, Loyola provided classroom space. There were, however, minor mix-ups that should be acknowledged concerning lodging arrangements and meals, but no "unrecoverable errors" that were not sufficiently solved in the end. Indeed, these were the kind of things that one typically runs into with small conferences.

One area of greater and, certainly, more important concern was with conference attendance. Fifty to fifty five people turned out for the conference. The planners would have liked to have seen something closer to eighty or even one hundred, and given the prime location in Chicago, this should have been easy to get, particularly given the selection of keynote speakers. One possibility about why turn-out was low might have been because of the late deadline for proposals, some delay in getting registration in place, and low publicity. In response, NACAP 2008 (to be held at Indiana University) will have an earlier deadline of February 1st. (The 2007 conference deadline was March 1st with a late deadline of March 21st.) Additionally, measures are being taken to attract a bigger audience by direct invitation.

All in all, however, the 2007 conference was a success. Presentations were generally of high quality, and for those new to issues surrounding the conference theme, there were many opportunities for learning.

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