

Conference Organizer Newsletter

IEEE

Signal Processing Society

April 2010

Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from the VP - Conferences
- 1 THEMES and ICASSP 2010 on ieeetv.org
- 2 Closing a Conference
- 3 SPS Preferred PCOs
- 4 ADA & Non-Discrimination Notices
- 4 NEW International Travel Restrictions
- 5 Upcoming Submission Deadlines
- 5 Upcoming Conferences and Workshops



THEMES and ICASSP 2010 on ieeetv.org

Last month the THEMES 2010 meeting offered seven high quality presentations and ICASSP 2010 attracted four prestigious plenary speakers. All eleven presentations were video recorded for use by the IEEE Signal Processing Society. Video recordings of the THEMES presentations and ICASSP 2010 Plenary Talks will soon be available on ieeetv.org.

In March 2010 ieeetv.org launched a new section called "Conference Coverage". This section focuses on the valuable content of IEEE conferences. The THEMES and ICASSP video files will be posted in this section.

The Conference Board encourages the ICASSP and ICIP organizing committees to video record the plenary talks and tutorial sessions at their own conferences to add to the SPS library of video content on ieeetv.org.

For information on how to add your conference videos to ieeetv.org please contact Nicole Allen at n.allen@ieee.org.

- Lisa Schwarzbeek, Conference Services Manager l.schwarzbeek@ieee.org

Message from the Vice President-Conferences

As most of the readers of this newsletter know, the conference board of the IEEE Signal Processing Society oversees all aspects of the conferences the society organizes. The board meets twice a year at ICASSP and ICIP, and conducts its business via e-mails and telephone conferences as necessary in between face-to-face meetings. The most recent conference board meeting was held in Dallas during ICASSP 2010. The majority of the meeting was spent on strategic discussions about how to enhance the quality of SPS conferences, improve access to a diverse group of people, and provide better service to volunteers who organize conferences. While the final draft of a plan is still in the works, there are a few ideas discussed at the meeting that I wish to share with you.

First, ensuring high quality of the technical program should be the foremost priority of all conference organizers. A rigorous paper review process is key to the creation of a high quality technical program. The most important part of the process is to select competent reviewers as well as ensure that they have manageable review loads and set high expectations for careful and thorough reviews. I encourage you to devise and implement innovative methods of ensuring high quality of paper reviews, and share with me the results of your efforts.

Second, our conferences and workshops should be more attractive and easy for students, researchers from economically challenged countries, and engineers from industry to attend. Student registration rates should be kept as low as possible. I recommend that the early student registration rates be no more than the incremental cost of adding one more attendee at the event. Conference organizers should seek outside resources whenever possible to support student participation and increase participation of researchers from economically disadvantaged locations. Conference organizers should recognize the reasons why engineers from industry attend conferences and what they wish to get out of conferences are not always the same as those of academic researchers. Efforts to address these differences and to make our conferences and workshops attractive to engineers from industry must be part of the planning process of all our conferences. I look forward to hearing from you about your efforts to enhance access to your conference and their results.

I wrote in the last issue about the Society's efforts to improve infrastructure support for paper processing, conference accounting and volunteer training. Our conference services manager, Lisa Schwarzbeek is in the process of setting up several advisory committees that will help guide the development of the tools for each of these tasks. This is your opportunity to make sure that the tools we develop and you use in the future meet your needs. With your help the conferences will transition to the new tools without significant investment of additional time and resources. If you would like to be part of these advisory committees, please send an e-mail to Lisa at l.schwarzbeek@ieee.org.

As always, I am eager to hear your opinions as well as feedback on all aspects of the conferences operation of the IEEE Signal Processing Society. Please send me a note at mathews@ece.utah.edu to share your thoughts.

- V. J. Mathews, VP-Conferences Mathews@ece.utah.edu

Closing a Conference

At the end of your conference there is probably nothing more you would like to do than bask in the glory of a successful meeting and get some much needed rest. We understand and we know you deserve it.

After a few days recuperating, you should be ready to dive back into the conference, but this time to begin the closing process. It is important to close a conference quickly for several reasons: the finances and nuances of the conference are fresh in everyone's memory, loan repayment and surplus distribution is needed for the IEEE's and SPS's financial health; and, in fact, there are financial penalties imposed on a conference for not closing within one year from the conference's anniversary date. Unfortunately the Society has experienced penalties.

Please note that the Conference Board wishes to have a conference closed within 90 days of completion and a workshop closed within 60 days. We understand that there are several issues that can prevent a timely closing. Anything from a complicated tax requirement to a billing dispute can make it very difficult to close. But the SPS staff is here to help you and we can make the process less difficult. But you need to tell us what help you need.

There are some things you can do to make the closing process less difficult:

- Take advantage of the IEEE Concentration Bank accounts which will make loan repayment, distribution of surplus and proof of bank account closure much easier.
- Request a carbon copy or voucher style checkbook with your concentration banking account. This will make it easier to track the numerous checks that will be written onsite and sometimes in a hurry.
- Use the IEEE Audit services. This will ensure that the audit will be accepted by IEEE.
- While the pre- and post-paperwork are usually treated as two separate entities, preparing the closing paperwork as far in advance as is possible can be a major factor in closing early.
- Alert the meeting venue ahead of time that you would like them to provide the invoice within a couple weeks of the conference. Review the invoice immediately and pay any undisputed charges immediately. Disputed charges should be amicably resolved within one month.
- Make certain that grant funds received for the conference are handled within the requirements of the granting institution. Do this as they are distributed or used and keep detailed records separate from the other conference records.
- Do not wait for your conference management company to do it for you. Stress the importance of closing the conference quickly throughout the planning process.
- Appoint a "Closing Team" from the key members of the Organizing Committee.
- Contact me at l.skeahan@ieee.org before your event to make sure you have all the necessary forms and checklists.

Above all, if you are having trouble closing conferences, please contact me. I have several years of experience in closing conferences and I am happy to help.

- Linda Skeahan, Administrator Conferences, l.skeahan@ieee.org



Closing Checklist

General Chair and Finance Chair

- Final Financial Report
- Certificate of Accuracy (COA) Form

Finance Chair

- Advanced Loan Repayment (if applicable)
- Surplus Distribution
- Close Bank Account after all banking is completed
- Proof of Bank Account Closure (for External Bank Account)
- Destroy Check Form (for IEEE Concentration Banking)
- Schedule of Payments (if applicable)
- Audit Report (if applicable)

Publications Chair

- Conference Publication (electronic files)
- Submit three registration CD proceedings to the SPS office

Registration Chair

- Attendees List

SPS Preferred PCOs

IEEE-SPS Conference Services staff has evaluated the professional conference organizers (PCO) advertised in this edition of the Newsletter. Volunteers are encouraged to choose a company from this list to support their conference organizing efforts.

Each conference organizing committee should submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) to three or more of the companies listed. The company will send you an estimate along with the details regarding the services.

For assistance in submitting an RFP please contact Lisa Schwarzbek, Conference Services Manager at l.schwarzbek@ieee.org.

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References : companies, government departments, institutions, academic circles, public organizations, laboratories...

Conferences: ICASSP (2200 pers.), Toulouse Space Show (1500 pers.), EPE (1000 pers.), EFI (900 pers.), ISBI (600 pers.), OCEANO (500 pers.), Spot Image (400 pers.), Alfediam paramedical (200 pers.), IITS (100 pers.)

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Conference Organizers have many things on their plate and while this may seem a bit trivial, in reality it is very important for all IEEE events. Because the IEEE is governed by US federal and state government rules regarding our nonprofit status, we are required to make certain that our attendees with disabilities are accommodated at our conferences and that they know who to contact for assistance. Please include the following statement in the conference guide, program, and on the website.

Accommodation for people with disabilities: "Please see the staff at the registration area for help with any special needs. Or telephone (phone number)."

Furthermore, we are required to include the following statement about the IEEE Non-Discrimination Policy in all of our conference materials. Please make sure this statement is included in the conference guide, program and on the website.

Non-discrimination Policy: "IEEE is committed to the principle that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, services, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by IEEE policy and/or applicable laws. To find more information about the IEEE policy visit www.ieee.org. Any person who believes that he or she has been the victim of illegal discrimination or harassment should contact IEEE Staff Director - Human Resources, at nondiscrimination@ieee.org or +1 732 465 6434. The mailing address is IEEE Human Resources, 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ, USA."

- Lisa Schwarzbek, Conference Services Manager,

l.schwarzbek@ieee.org

New Travel Regulation for International Visitors Takes Effect

Effective January 20, inbound travelers to the United States from Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries may be denied boarding by the airlines if they haven't complied with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program.

ESTA, introduced in January 2009, requires all international travelers from VWP countries to register in an online database. Previously, international travelers had to fill out an I-94W form before each trip, but ESTA seeks to streamline and update the process. Now, international travelers to the United States must go to the ESTA Web site and fill out an application before entering the country by air or sea. If approved, the authorization is good for two years and can be renewed. Travelers no longer have to fill out an I-94W form before each trip. U.S. officials say ESTA will speed up the process for travelers, enable customs officials to screen passengers in advance and improve security.

Since ESTA was unveiled on January 12, 2009, it hasn't been strictly enforced. Those who didn't apply for ESTA were given a friendly reminder to do so next time. But starting January 20, 2010, the program has new teeth and, according to the Web site, "VWP travelers who have not received an ESTA approval ... may be denied boarding. CBP [U.S. Customs and Border Protection] will handle emergencies on a case-by-case basis." On January 20, DHS officials initiated a 60-day transition to enforced ESTA compliance for air carriers. After that period, the I-94W forms will be eliminated, and airlines risk fines for allowing travelers to board without the proper documentation.

What does this mean for conferences? The U.S. Office of Travel and Tourism advises planners to alert international members and attendees to these new regulations. They should also post reminders on conference Web sites and registration Web pages and provide a link to the ESTA Web site.

The ESTA requirement does not affect U.S. citizens returning from overseas, people from VWP countries traveling on a valid U.S. visa, or travelers from non-VWP nations.

- Lisa Schwarzbek, Conference Services Manager, l.schwarzbek@ieee.org

Upcoming Submission Deadlines

Call for Papers	Location	Date	Tutorial/Special Session	Submission Deadline
IEEE International Workshop on Machine Learning for Signal Processing (MLSP 2010)	Kittila, Finland	Aug. 29 – Sept 1, 2010	N/A	April 11, 2010
6 th IEEE Sensor Array and Multichannel Signal Processing Workshop (SAM 2010)	Israel	Oct. 4-7, 2010	N/A	April 12, 2010
IEEE International Workshop on Multimedia Signal Processing (MMSP 2010)	Saint-Malo, France	Oct. 4-6, 2010	N/A	April 25, 2010
6 th IEEE International Conference on Natural Language Processing and Knowledge Engineering (NLP-KE 2010)	Beijing, China	Aug. 21-23, 2010	N/A	May 10, 2010
IEEE International Workshop on Information Forensics and Security (WIFS 2010)	Seattle, WA	Dec. 12-15, 2010	April 30, 2010	June 15, 2010

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

Upcoming Conferences	Location	Advanced Registration	Conference Dates
9 th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Information Processing on Sensor Networks (IPSN)	Stockholm, Sweden	March 15, 2010	April 12-16, 2010
7 th IEEE International Symposium on Biomedical Imaging (ISBI 2010)	Rotterdam, The Netherlands	March 1, 2010	April 14-17, 2010
2010 IEEE 11 th International Workshop on Signal Processing Advances in Wireless Communications (SPAWC 2010)	Marrakech, Morocco	June 13, 2010	June 20 – 23, 2010

Send your suggestions or comments to Lisa Schwarzbek at l.schwarzbek@ieee.com.

Past Editions of the CO Newsletter can be found on the SPS website.

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 Lisa Schwarzbek, Conference Services Manager l.schwarzbek@ieee.org
 Linda Skeahan, Administrator Conferences lskeahan@ieee.org
 Nicole Allen, Meeting Coordinator n.allen@ieee.org

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Next Issue:

COS – Conference Organizer Solutions
 E-Notices: Best Practices
 Evaluation Surveys
 Setting Conference Dates