

Preface: General Chair

The year 2000 gives Asia its first opportunity to host the annual meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics. The ACL Executive Committee, under the leadership of Wolfgang Wahlster, selected one of Asia's most exciting cities, Hong Kong, as the venue, and organized an international conference committee including many representatives of Asian countries. ACL-2000 also signifies a change in the tenor of global network communication as access to the WWW in many languages grows with the development of practical applications enabling multilingual information access.

The technical program covers all areas of the field, from theory to practical methodology. There are four theme sessions, each with its own theme. One theme, Asian NLP, was proposed through the collaboration of several Asian members. The two program co-chairs, one from the east and one from the west, are Chang-Ning Huang, Microsoft Research, China, and K. Vijay-Shanker, University of Delaware, USA. I would like to thank them, and their program committees and teams of reviewers. Their hard work has produced an exciting program with two parallel sessions balancing between general sessions and thematic ones.

We are honored to have Aravind K. Joshi, University of Pennsylvania, USA, an internationally recognized pioneer in computational linguistics, as the ACL-2000 Honorary Chair. The keynote speakers at the welcome reception to be held on the evening of October 2nd are Aravind K. Joshi speaking on "Aspects for Research and Development in NLP and Their Internationalization," and Makoto Nagao, President, Kyoto University, Japan, the first president of the International Association for Machine Translation, speaking on "NLP in the age of Information Technology Revolution." As part of the conference program, we are also honored to have three invited speakers: Susan E. Brennan, State University of New York at Stony Brook, USA, Roger K Moore, 20/20 Speech Limited, UK, and Jun'ichi Tsuji, University of Tokyo, Japan.

As is customary at ACL conferences, the ACL-2000 program consists of the main conference, tutorials, workshops, and demonstrations, but with a student research workshop instead of student sessions as in the past. We have four tutorials, whose themes reflect current trends in information internationalization and the IT revolution, and seven workshops with three organized by the ACL special interest groups SIGDAT, SIGDIAL and SIGLEX. Among these, SIGDAT plans to hold a joint conference on Empirical Methods in NLP and Very Large Corpora (EMNLP/VLC-2000) as an ACL workshop. There are more than ten demonstrations that show practical service images and software tools. I would like to thank the Tutorial Co-Chair: John Carroll, University of Sussex, UK; the Tutorial Co-Chair: Hemant

Darbari, Pune University, India; the Workshop Chair: Nicoletta Calzolari, Instituto di Linguistica Computazionale del CNR, Italy; the Workshop Program Committee, Roy J. Byrd, IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center, U.S.A., Lauri Carlson, University of Helsinki, Finland, and Sadao Kurohashi, Kyoto University, Japan, and the Demonstration Chair: Norbert Reithinger, DFKI GmbH, Germany, all of whom composed attractive programs.

One of the most valuable aspects of ACL conferences is the opportunity offered to students, who can gain a broad perspective on the field, and also have the opportunity to present their own research, not in special student sessions, but in the main conference sessions. As at ANLP-NAACL 2000, we tried a new approach with a Student Research Workshop for which we published a workshop proceedings separate from the conference proceedings. I would like to thank the Student Workshop Co-Chair: Olivia Kwong, University of Cambridge, UK; the Student Workshop Co-Chair: Sergey Pakhomov, University of Minnesota, USA; the Student Research Workshop Faculty Advisor: Philip Resnik, University of Maryland, USA; and all of the Student Research Workshop Program Committee, non-student and student members alike, who produced an excellent program and provided feedback to the students on their research.

Dekai Wu, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), Hong Kong, as the Local Arrangement Chair took care of the extensive negotiations and arrangements needed to accommodate various gaps between different social systems. Kathleen F. McCoy, Secretary-Treasurer of the ACL, and Priscilla Rasmussen, ACL Business Manager, deserve a great deal of credit for supporting the conference committee through the entire process to the conference opening. Keh-Yih Su, Behavior Design Corporation, China, and Steven Krauwer, Utrecht University, The Netherlands, as the Publicity Co-Chairs greatly expanded awareness of the conference in the related communities. Samuel Harp, Jun Zhao and Terry Wong handled various matters related to the conference as Local Arrangements Committee members and were responsible for creating and maintaining the ACL-2000 Web Pages.

There are many more people who deserve thanks for contributing in one way or another. ACL is an all volunteer organization, and it is a credit to everyone who participates that we can put on an event of this size and scope, benefiting everyone who attends through the exchange of ideas and inspiration we get from being close to the leading edge of the field.

Hitoshi Iida
General Chair, ACL-2000
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