

Conference Report: The Active Web

Alan Dix, and Dave Clarke

On 20th January 1999 a British HCI Group day conference was held on "The Active Web".

The call for papers for this was very successful with a very large number of extended abstracts submitted. These were refereed by a panel of 25 referees, each paper having at least 4 reviews. In the end 12 papers were selected for the main speaker programme plus a number of posters and demos. However, the standard of the papers was extremely high and it was very difficult deciding which papers to leave out of the programme.

The final programme included presenters from five European countries. If we include co-authors, authors of posters and other submissions and referees, academics and practitioners from twelve countries and four continents were represented in total. Presenters and attendees included both academic and practitioners capturing that most exciting essence of web-related work: research and practice are closely related, it is a field that is constantly operating 'on the edge'.

Student Bursaries

aQtive limited sponsored several bursaries to help students attend the conference. These were awarded to four students based on short position statements about their current work and plans. They were awarded to Ann Light (University of Sussex), Thomas Tan (Middlesex University), Jacqueline Harris (Staffordshire University) and Soha Maad (University of Warwick).

Speaker Programme

Given the number of presentations in the day, it was a fast moving programme with vigorous discussion. Several speakers included live connections to remote (international) systems. (Amazingly) these all worked flawlessly, with the only technical problems being the more mundane issues of swopping monitor leads between jostling laptops and fits of temperament from PowerPoint ...

The speakers covered a wide range of application areas and web technologies. Several themes recurred during the talks, most notably the separation between semantic content and presentation. Also the issue of time and delays came up in several talks reminding us of the 'Time and the Web' conference we ran in 1997.

Note that the descriptions below are our own view of the talks and are not the authors' own abstracts. We hope we haven't misrepresented them too much.

Adaptable Hypermedia with Web Standards and Tools

*Lloyd Rutledge, Lynda Hardman, Jacco van Ossenbruggen and Dick Bulterman
CWI, Amsterdam*

Much of the success of the web has been due to the use of existing de facto and de jure standards, such as GIF, JPEG, SGML and Quicktime; coupled with the rapid evolution and adoption of new standards, such as HTML, HTTP, CSS and XML (albeit often 'improved' – read 'broken' – by major web-browsers!). Lloyd described how the group at CWI are