Executive report of the Second ITU-T Kaleidoscope Academic Conference "Innovations for Digital Inclusion"
Mar del Plata, Argentina, 31 August - 1 September 2009

Executive report

The second ITU-T Kaleidoscope event (http://itu-kaleidoscope.org/2009) themed on "Innovations for Digital Inclusion" took place in Mar del Plata, Argentina, on 31 August - 1 September 2009. This academic conference continued and expanded in Latin-America the success of the first Kaleidoscope event "Innovations in NGN", which was held in Geneva, 12-13 May 2008, as follow up of a Consultation meeting on cooperation between ITU-T and Universities held in Geneva, 18-19 January 2007.

Organized by ITU with the technical co-sponsorship of the IEEE Communications Society, *"Innovations for Digital Inclusion"* was held at the kind invitation of Argentina, with the support of Cisco Systems and Nokia. The conference brought together the best academic minds from 24 nations around the world to present their future visions to achieve digital inclusion. The conference also included an exhibition with six South American universities, which provided insight into their activities and encouraged exchange of ideas and new contacts amongst the participants.

Kaleidoscope 2009, that required a 13-month preparation effort led by the general chair, Mr Yoichi Maeda (NTT, Japan), was extremely successful bringing together over 110 participants of 24 countries, which included, beyond the regular ITU attendance (the event piggybacked with an NGN-GSI event), students and professors from 30 academic organizations. They actively participated, networked and interacted for the presentation of 20 lecture papers and 12 poster session papers, which were selected from the 83 original paper proposals using a rigorous double-blind, peer-revision process that involved 113 subject matter expert reviewers.

At the event, Richard Stallman, founder of the GNU Linux project and now President of the Free Software Foundation, presented an invited paper *"Is digital inclusion a good thing? How can we make sure it is?"* that set the tone of the conference stimulating interesting discussions. Projects for digital inclusion must take special care that the computing they promote is the freedom-respecting kind. Although everybody agreed on the principle, various opinion were expressed by participants on the issues the proposed solution (using free/libre software) could arise, especially when the current business models were analysed. Surely, activities directed at "including" more people in the use of digital technology must take into account people human rights at a planning stage.

As per the first Kaleidoscope event, three factors have helped raising the profile of this conference as a high quality one from the academic perspective:

− The rather strict acceptance ratio just below 25% for the lecture papers and below 40% for the sum of lecture and poster papers.

− The availability of the proceedings through IEEE's Xplore repository.

− Publication of the best conference papers in the Kaleidoscope special edition of the IEEE Communications Magazine. For the Kaleidoscope 2008 this is found in IEEE Communication Magazine Vol.47 Issue 5, May 2009, pp. 80-113, and another special issue is being organized for this year's Kaleidoscope.

The initiative has been very well received by both academia and ITU members. Participation statistics show that the target public (academia and R&D) was well represented.

Concerning increasing in cooperation with universities, the many academics in attendance expressed the importance of the role of universities in the standardization process and the high value of strong collaboration between ITU, academia, and research institutes.

– Cooperation with academia needs to be reinforced, in particular to encourage the participation and involvement of **experts from the academic communities** in the development of standards. The kaleidoscope is a useful tool to enhance awareness in the academic community on the ongoing standardization work of ITU and the role that academics can play within it.

– ITU should try to find a way for universities to join or participate by means which they can afford. In this respect, Malcolm Johnson, Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, highlighted Resolution 71, recently approved at the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly 2008, which invites the ITU Council to consider the admission of academic institutions, universities and associated research establishments to ITU-T at reduced cost. His proposal to the ITU Council to be held in October 2009 for a reduced fee of $2000 was welcomed by participants.

Four best paper wards were granted:

– First prize: *ROFSO: A universal platform for convergence of fiber and free-space optical communication networks*, Kamugisha Kazaura, Kazuhiko Wakamori, Mitsuji Matsumoto (Waseda University, Japan); Takeshi Higashino, Katsutoshi Tsukamoto, Shozo Komaki (Osaka University, Japan)

– Second prize (ex aequo): *An ID/Locator Split Architecture of Future Networks*, Ved Kafle, Hideki Otsuki, Masugi Inoue (National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, Japan)

– Second prize (ex aequo): *Quality of Service management for ISP: A model and implementation methodology based on ITU-T Rec.802 framework*, Eva Ibarrola (University of the Basque Country, Spain); Jin Xiao (University of Waterloo, Canada); Fidel Liberal, Armando Ferro (University of the Basque Country, Spain)

– Second prize (ex aequo): *Discrimination in NGN service markets: Opportunity or barrier to digital inclusion?*, Fernando Beltran (University of Auckland, New Zealand); Lina Gomez (Centro de Investigacion de las Telecomunicaciones, Colombia)

The **third Kaleidoscope academic conference** should attract more participants, leveraging on the success of both first and second events. The theme is currently under discussion as well as the venue which could be in Asia or Africa, depending on country invitations, in the middle of December 2010. Information will be available at http://itu-kaleidoscope.org/2010.

The full version of this report is available online from the Kaleidoscope conference webpage at: http://itu-kaleidoscope.org/2009.

_____