

Travel Report from HPCA 2004

Håkan Zeffer and Martin Karlsson

Uppsala University, Department of Information Technology, Division of Computer Systems
zeffer@it.uu.se, martin.karlsson@it.uu.se

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The Tenth International Symposium on High-Performance Computer Architecture (HPCA 2004) was held February 14 to 18 in Madrid, Spain. HPCA is one of the best conferences in the field of computer architecture. In conjunction with the conference we also attended a tutorial and a workshop. The tutorial “Advanced Processor Architectures and Verification Challenges” was held by Sunil Kakkar from IBM Global Services. Verification of computer systems of today is getting more and more complex. Sunil showed us how IBM addressed these problems. The tutorial was interesting and gave us some new knowledge. The workshop on Computer Architecture Evaluation using Commercial Workloads (CAECW-7) looked very interesting but was in fact quite disappointing.

This years HPCA conference contained a lot of processor oriented papers which was one of the reasons why we wanted to attend. The research quality of the papers presented at the conference was of very high quality with a few exceptions. The good papers gave us lot of new and interesting knowledge whereas the poor papers (there were two of them) made us quite upset.

The invited keynote talks were overall very good. The conference also contained a panel discussing with members from both industry and academia discussing the research gap between industry and academia. The panel turned out to be quite entertaining since one of the panel members and one of the members of the audience started arguing in a less than cordial way.

As usual the most interesting place of the conference was in the hallway just outside the conference room. For example, we spent an hour interrogating a CTO from IBM about their upcoming server design. Surprisingly he was quite forthcoming about it, despite that the details of the design haven't been made official yet

We enjoyed our stay in Madrid very much. We visited both the Prado museum and the museum of modern art, which we both enjoyed. However, we did have problem with the Spanish eating habits given that we were preparing for the “Vasaloppet” cross country ski race. Overall we are very satisfied with the conference and the topics.