

Artes travel report, RTSS'03, Cancun

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I went to Cancun in Mexico to present my paper “Synthetic utilization in online aperiodic scheduling” at the conference IEEE Real-time systems symposium (RTSS) and to spread my Ph.D. thesis to colleagues.

Scientific aspects This year RTSS had parallel sessions: one session dealing traditional real-time systems issues and the other dealt with sensor networks and hardware-software codesign. In both of these sessions, the two hottest research topics were: (i) wireless communication and (ii) techniques to improve energy-efficiency. My own area, multiprocessor scheduling, remains an active area with a session dedicated to it. One particularly interesting paper was: T. Baker, “Multiprocessor EDF and Deadline Monotonic Schedulability Analysis”. My biggest surprise was the low number of papers from Pisa/Pavia.

So what did I get out of this conference? I had some interesting discussions with colleagues and my poster got attention. I brought printed copies of my Ph.D. theses and put them on the table at the registration desk. All the ones that I put there were taken.

Non-scientific aspects Cancun is in Mexico but it feels like a part of the U.S. You can pay in U.S. dollars. There are McDonalds, WalMart, Gold's gym and Porsche shops. Department stores play Christmas songs in English (“Little drummer boy” is popular). Of those bartenders I talked to, nobody knew how to prepare the Mexican chocolate drink (it contains cinnamon). People in TV commercials don't look very hispanic either.

In Cancun, salespeople are verbally aggressive, so it is important to know the word “no”. Taxi-drivers ask if you want to go somewhere. Salespeople ask you to enter their store to have a look at their merchandise (if you hesitate their sales pitches intensify). Salespeople ask you to enter their restaurant or bar (in swedish: inkastare). Don't be surprised if a stranger contacts you on the street trying to sell a time sharing apartment. Mexicans call you “amigo” even if you are a complete stranger. These behaviors are understandable because it was low season in Cancun and the typical Mexican salary is 50 SEK/day.

My advice when visiting Cancun: use sun oil.