Travel Report from RTAS'00

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The trip

The trip went to Washington D.C. (USA) where I visited the 6th IEEE Real-Time Technology and Applications Symposium (RTAS'00) which took place May 30 to June 2. The purpose of the trip was to "watch and learn" and finally see the celebrities of the real-time community.

The conference

Being true to its name, RTAS emphasize on applications rather than theory. This makes it a very broad conference since there is an unlimited number of (soft) real-time problems. There were 26 accepted papers out of 84 submitted. In addition, 8 Work-in-Progress papers were presented. The number of registered participants was 96 of which the most part came from the US or (East) Asia.

The presentations

The first day, which was actually before the main conference, there were three tutorials: "Web Caching and Multimedia Streaming on the Internet", "Quality of Service in IP Networks" and "Voice over IP". None of the topics seemed that interesting to me so I skipped this day.

The conference started with a keynote speech by Janos Sztipanovits entitled "Software for Embedded Systems: Opportunities and Challenges". (Unfortunately, I missed this talk due to illness.)

As for the papers, most of them addressed practical aspects of (soft) real-time systems. This included evaluation of existing tools and methods (NT, CORBA, ATM) concerning their real-time capabilities, as well as approaches on how to solve specific real-time problems (web caching, expert system response time, distributed file system). There were only a few papers that I could related to my own research (scheduling, embedded systems).

The program included a panel discussion on "Building a University and Industry Partnership in the Research and Development of Real-Time Embedded Systems" which to me sounded like they wanted something like ARTES in the US. Apparently, not that much cooperation is performed mainly due to lack of funding and diverse project objectives. The Swedish national initiative was mentioned as a role-model.

In conclusion, the conference provided a good opportunity to get a wider view of the real-time domain.

The organization

The conference was hosted at the OMNI Shoreham Hotel located in central Washington D.C. The hotel was quite luxurious (many presidents have partied there) but seemed to be frequent conference host (there were other ongoing conferences). Overall I think the organization was good but I would have appreciated Internet access and a list of the participants.

About Washington D.C.

Downtown Washington D.C. is rather small and consists of a green area (The Mall) surrounded by impressive old style buildings. A number of attractions (The White House, Washington Monument, Capitol Hill) are located here within just a few miles. A lot of time can be spent visiting the Smithsonian Museums or just wandering around "The Mall".

The future

Next time RTAS will be held in Taipei, Taiwan May 30 to June 1, 2001.