Tsuyoshi Tajima, 11 July 2006

A Report from EPAC06

I attended the EPAC06 and looked at how things were going.
The following are my impressions, comments and some proposals for the PAC07 based on my observation.

Overall, it was a well organized nice conference. The staff members did a great job.
There is a photo gallery of the conference at http://epac06.org/general/Photos. The popup slideshow is a nice addition. Hope we will have a good photographer like this guy.

- Registration
  - It looked well organized, but there were some people who had registered before but the staff was unable to find their bags. I was waiting behind one of such people and it took a long time for the staff to tell him that they cannot find the bag and please wait. As a result, the queue became quite long. It would be a good idea to have an extra booth to deal with such people in addition to the on-site registration booth.

  - There were 2 name tags in the bag, one is for the holder and the other is, I think, for the bag, but I had difficulty attaching it to my bag. We should prepare a separate holder for the bag. I also think we should prepare 3 types of name tags, one for the name badge, one for the bag and one for the poster presenters. They should be business card size and in different colors. (I will mention this again in the poster session section later.)

- Reception
  - Lots of wine and whisky, but little food. (I might have been at a wrong place for food.) I think we should provide more food at PAC07.

- Program
  - It went smoothly most of the time. There was a problem in the last session on Friday. The speaker was unable to move some slides forward. A few years ago, I had the same problem. In my case, it was due to a setting of PowerPoint presentation timing. We need to have enough time to check all the presentations thoroughly and to know how to fix this type of problem. We should request that the speakers upload their slides by Thursday or Friday prior to the conference. Also, we will need to find and ask those who have not uploaded the slides by the deadline to upload or bring them to us ASAP.

  - Regarding the Q&A session, the distribution of microphones was good. (I did not check on this in the smaller auditorium.) We need to distribute the microphones and support people strategically so the microphone can be handed quickly to the person who wants to ask a question.

- o The small program booklet has some errors and I heard that there are some missing pages in the poster session description. I hate to have errors in documents, so let's have plenty of time for checking the documents that we will create.

- Poster sessions
  - o The area was shared with the industrial exhibition and there were some spots where you can get coffee and Scotch whisky!. It was very well arranged and drew a lot of people to the industry booths.

  - o One thing that I think might be better is to make the distance between the rows of posters larger to ease some congestion. Although I have not checked if we can do that, since the halls for PAC07 poster sessions are quite large, I hope we can do it.

  - o I sometimes could not tell if the person standing in front of the poster is the presenter or not. During the first 30 minutes or so, it is easy to find the presenter since he/she is waiting for visitors, but after a while, he/she tends to talk to the other presenters and colleagues and it becomes difficult to tell who the presenter is. So, I suggest that we give the presenters a different color name tag on which the poster number is clearly printed and request that they have the tag on his chest during the presentation.

- Industrial exhibition
  - o As stated earlier, it seemed to have drawn a good number of people probably because the place was mixed with the poster session.

  - o In the joint xPAC LOC meeting held on Thursday afternoon, it was mentioned that some companies were not notified and the number of the companies was limited due to the space available. I am afraid that there are companies that we have not sent the first email. John Thomason, the LOC chair, said he has a large data base of vendors. I will get it from him and ask John Eddleman and Tamson Smith to compare it with our list.

  - o We should accommodate as many vendors as possible. Hope the 2 halls are large enough for both vendor exhibition and poster sessions. We need to design the layout of the 2 halls soon.

  - o We need to discuss not only the industry exhibition, but also the space for APS, IEEE, EPAC08, some Universities and other organizations that want to advertise.

- Award session
  - o It was a simple session with an introduction of each awardee, presentation of the plaque/medal to him and a photo session followed by the presentation by the awardee.

- o I cannot remember the style of the PAC award session. Hope Rich Sheffield has looked into this.

- Banquet
  - o They had 3 places to have the banquet. I believe the reason is that there was no single place that can seat all the attendees.

  - o I attended the one at the Royal Museum of Scotland. The food was very good and the entertainment (bag pipe marching band) was also quite impressive. Since the impression of food and attractions stays in attendees and their companies mind for a long time, we need to select good food and attractions.

- Other
  - o I noticed that there was an area where people can deposit some of their stuff while attending the conference.   Since the PAC07 will be held in summer, we probably won't need a space for coats, but some attendees might think it useful.

  - o On Sunday, there was a special poster session for students who got the grant. I am not sure but the reason might be that those students will need to assist the LOC staff members and chairpersons during the sessions from Monday through Friday. It was mentioned that it might be better to include other students' posters. We need to discuss how we will support students and utilize the supported students in an efficient manner.

  - o Regarding announcements of special events, etc., we need to do it as many times as possible using all available ways, e.g., guidebook, bulletin boards, email, vocal announcements. Some people seem to miss the information without reading the guidebook carefully even if all the details are written there.

  - o It was quite comfortable to be at the conference center probably because there are plenty of sofas, benches, chairs and tables as well as drinks available all the time during the conference hours.

  - o Internet Café was open from 8:00 AM daily and was very comfortable. Also, free wireless network was very convenient for most people. Unfortunately my laptop crashed the first day and I was unable to use the free network, but I guess the band width was wide enough not to slow down the connection speed significantly. We need to have the wireless capability with enough band width at PAC07 at all the areas except auditoria as we discussed a while ago.

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Proposal

Here I would like to make the following proposal for the PAC07.

1. Most of the LOC and staff wear a T-shirt in red with a lettering of "PAC" on the front and back so that the attendees can easily find a staff to ask questions. I guess some editors who are always in the editors room do not need this, but it is up to them.

2. As mentioned earlier, we will make 3 business card size tags, one for the name holder, one for the bag and one for the poster session presentation. The poster presentation name tag will have a different background color, e.g., green or dark yellow, with poster number printed out.

3. Quick communication is necessary to solve problems. Cell phones have been used for this most of the time. We will probably also use cell phones. I suggest that we will prepare small cards on which most of the important contacts' cell phone numbers are listed, and give this card to all the staff members and supporting students. We might need to rent some cell phones for some students who will come from overseas.