IOI NEWSLETTER

IOI 2016 - The 10th volume of the OLYMPIADS IN INFORMATICS journal

The International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) community comes together during each Olympiad and has the opportunity to communicate during these worldwide events. We face many of the same problems such as how do we pick our students, how do we train them, what is suitable material and so on. As a community, we have a great deal of accumulated experience gained by training our students and running our national contests. In order to study our experiences and to share with other countries, the IOI conference, held jointly with and supported by the IOI, was established in 2007.

Seventeen papers were selected for the first IOI conference, mostly discussing the running of and the issues facing several national Olympiads. These papers composed the first volume of the IOI journal OLYMPIADS in INFORMATICS. The opening editorial was written by Arturo Cepeda, Richard Forster, Krassimir Manev (past or current presidents) and Valentina Dagiene, an Editor of the journal.

In this year, 2016, while we are preparing the 10th volume of the IOI journal, we should think back over the last ten years. A time for looking at what had gone on before and what would be changing for the future. Think of the thousands of students who have been given the opportunity of attending an IOI, and of the team leaders, teachers and researchers who have given their time to training the students, and of the organisers who worked tirelessly. Think of the authors who have had the opportunity to express their ideas and of the readers who have spent pleasurable time reading the papers. Each volume represents a year's work by the authors, reviewers and editorial board.

In the nine volumes published there have been 165 papers (114 research, 42 reports and 9 reviews) totalling 1769 pages by 189 authors from 47 countries. It is really wonderful that authors have represented so many countries! Some of the authors have been previous year's contestants. Many authors have had published 5 or more papers: S. Combefis, M. Forišek, D. Ginat, M. Jovanov, V. Kiryukhin, M. Kubica, K. Manev, M. Mareš, M. Opmanis, P. Pankov, J. Radoszewski, E. Stankov, T. Verhoeff.

The Olympiads in Informatics is focused on the research and practice of professionals who are working in the field of teaching informatics to talented student. The format for the journal follows three tracks (since the 5th volume): the primary section of the journal focuses on research; the second report section is devoted to sharing national experiences; the last section presents book reviews.

It has been an aim of the IOI conference, since it was established, to become part of, and bring in, the wider pedagogical community. We have not had many papers authored from those outside the IOI, but one or two have appeared in each volume.

Valentina Dagienė in non-conference mode

Recognition outside the community has perhaps been slower than we would like – gradually we are appearing in scientific databases and being indexed by Scopus, EBSCO, ERIC, ERA, InfoBase Index, Cabell Publishing, and CEEOL. The latest volumes were included in Thomson Reuters Conference Proceedings Citation Index.

The jubilee 10th IOI conference will take place in Kazan, Russia, August 2016. Please submit your proposals (title and short abstracts, 5-10 lines) for papers by 25th of January to Valentina Dagiene (valentina.dagiene@mii.vu.lt). The full papers are to be submitted by 31 of March. Size limits are 8-18 pages for research papers and 4-8 pages for national reports.

Reviewing of books, presentation of an interesting task or the explanation of a solution, describing programming games, etc. are welcome as well. Be creative in suggesting new and interesting items!

Information about the journal can be found at http://www.ioinformatics.org/oi_index.shtml Many thanks to all those who have assisted with the volumes – authors, reviewers and other assistants. A lot of work goes into reviewing, correcting, proofreading, and finalising the papers. Peer reviewing all of the papers takes a significant amount of time and work and special thanks should be given to reviewers – we are looking forward to getting new names.

Thanks for your collaboration, Valentina

The A-Z of the IOI

Country leaders are being invited to contribute an article about their experiences with the IOI which are less formal than journal articles.

From the end of the alphabet is UKRAINE

We started at IOI, as many other counties, in 1992. I was one of four to represent Ukraine that year.

We'd taken part in a lot of training sessions, were good in coding, but had no idea (the same as our coaches), what kind of tasks we were going to solve. It was just 4th IOI and the scientific committee had a great choice of absolutely new tasks to propose for the contest. We had one task and five hours to think about it, to invent a solution. It was not a sport that time, it was a challenge.

Olympiads in informatics in Ukraine originated in 1988, one year before the first IOI and some of those initial people are still in the team who drive our national contests. At some moment we switched from manual evaluation to a test based approach and it made everyone's life easier. Our first national contest with automatic evaluation was in 1997. That time, still, we had a lot of tasks to surprise contestants, to make the contest a challenge, not a test. I heard complaints from my colleagues that it's difficult for them to train their teams, every year some tasks were solved with approach which have never been used before. But the contestants enjoyed it.

These days IOI tends to be more predictable, we know which algorithms to teach and which to skip. This is good if the only target is a medal but it is not something we target in the national contest as we still want to give a possibility to the contestants who are able to invent. Can we give a task if we do not know full solution? Yes! Can contestant get more points than problem setter? Of course! Let them experience winning. This is the fun!

Vitaly Bondarenko

IOI 2016

The 2016 International Olympiad in Informatics will be held in Kazan, Russia from Friday, August 12 to Friday, August 19, 2016. The website http://ioi2016.ru/ is well developed with much information already available.