

FIRST Retreat a success

On two beautiful sunny days, 25th and 26th of June, FIRST held its annual retreat at LO-Skolen on the outskirts of Helsingør (Elsinore). We were happy that the participant list included 18 PhD students and the same number of supervisors from all partner institutions; DIKU, DTU, ITU, and RUC.



The FIRST Research School

The first day saw an interesting presentation from Mathias Grüttner, owner and CEO of Rhetorica, on non-verbal communication, covering everything from the importance of tactility and tone of voice to gesticulation, including the worldwide variance between accepted norms.

Mathias presented current research in the way people communicate and demonstrated, through practical examples, people's understandings of personal space.

This was followed by a session from Thore Husfeldt on techniques for giving a scientific presentation, comprising of an example of a previous presentation he had given followed by a walk-through of why he adopted certain techniques.



Thore is trying to connect the dots

After lunch, participants were given the opportunity to improve a distributed

presentation, working in cross-institution groups to put into practice the techniques they had learnt.

A poster session concluded the working day, with each PhD student presenting their current research to others. Following this, groups dispersed for social activities and reunited for dinner which was followed by more socialising over a few drinks and games of pool and table football.



The poster review session saw many discussions

The second day's activities started with a presentation from Thomas Hildebrandt on techniques for reviewing papers for conferences, workshops and journals, including a look at the operation of programme committees.

Sample reviews were shown, including pointers on what to look for in papers to optimize the process as well as what was expected of members of the academic community.



Thomas points at peer review dilemmas

This was followed by a presentation from Anders Sandholm, product manager at Google in Aarhus, on what options were available to PhDs after finishing. He told the audience about his experiences from different workplaces, ranging from his first post-PhD job experience as a software developer in Germany, the intense work-life as consultant for McKinsey & Company, being part of small Danish research-based start-up Configit and finally joining the global work

environment of Google. He fielded a range of questions on what was expected of PhDs by industry, and advised students to focus on what interested them.

After lunch, the PhD student groups were invited to review two papers, again putting the techniques discussed during the morning session into practice. This was followed by a brief discussion of the FIRST administration process and a little more time for socializing before everybody headed home.

Overall, interesting invited presentations, an excellent location, delicious food, and good social facilities meant the retreat was enjoyable for all participants.

Slides & Posters available

For those who did not attend the retreat, as well as those who wish to refresh their memory, the slides from the presentations on non-verbal communication and feedback and the peer review process are now available on the FIRST website, under **Intranet** and **Downloads**.

Additionally, the posters presented at the retreat continue to be added to the website as they become available.

Website content

FIRST members are highly encouraged to submit content for the website, including but not limited to forthcoming events, conferences and opportunities for collaboration that may interest other members of the Research School. It is impossible for the secretariat to be aware of all activities, so it is up to you to give your event focus!

News on People

FIRST PhD student at ITU, Espen Højsgaard, defends his part A exam on July 31st. He will have his external stay at University of Edinburgh in the fall, visiting the group of Stephen Gilmore and working on the integration of quantitative model checking and bigraphical reactive systems.

Activities

A Summer course in Computer Science – Types at Work will be held at DTU from 10-21 August with lectures by Fritz Henglein (DIKU), Flemming Nielson (DTU Informatics), Hanne Riis Nielson (DTU Informatics), and Andrew Kennedy (Microsoft Research Cambridge). See <http://typesatwork.imm.dtu.dk/> for more information.

Danish Static Analysis Symposium (DANSAS '09) will be held in Odense, August 20, 2009. See <http://dansas.imada.sdu.dk> for more information.

From 7-11th of September, the ALGO 2009 conference will be held at ITU. With hundreds of participants, ALGO is the annual meeting combining the major European algorithms conference, European Symposium on Algorithms (ESA), and a number of smaller specialised conferences and workshops. Registration is open and early registration deadline is August 1st. See <http://algo2009.itu.dk/> for more information.

A PhD & Adv. MSc level course on Process Modelling and Validation is held September-December at DTU (Course code: 02246).

On November 10th-11th ITU will host the FIRST Autumn School on Modal Logic. This is followed by the Methods4Modalities workshop from November 12th-14th held at the Engineer House in Copenhagen. See <http://m4m.loria.fr/M4M6/> for more information.

Network and lunch meetings

A network lunch and associated meetings are scheduled for Friday, 28th of August at DIKU. The September network meeting is scheduled to be held on Friday 25th of September at Roskilde University.

Suggestions for Activities

Proposals for courses, workshops, guests, etc. from members will be considered for FIRST funding. Forward a short description to Thomas Hildebrandt (hilde@itu.dk) and Nhi Quyen Le (nqle@itu.dk) including a budget sketch using the template found under "FAQs" sub-page.