Call for Papers
MEDICHI 2007
Methodic and Didactic Challenges of the History of Informatics
12-13 April 2007
Klagenfurt University, Austria

The MEDICHI 2007 Workshop is being organized by the Austrian Society for the History of Informatics (OEGIG), the Austrian Computer Society (OCG) and the Klagenfurt University.

Motivation

Informatics (computer science) is a thriving science yet its brief history is barely credited as an academic discipline. The existing body of historical literature, while small, includes some brilliant contributions, especially biographical and technological chronicles, as well as some excellent anecdotal treatments. Nevertheless, the methods and didactical approaches for examining the history of informatics are poorly developed; the number of conferences and journals dealing with these issues is few, as is the number of young scientists doing scientific research on the history of informatics. This is not because these topics are uninteresting or irrelevant; rather, the conditions for methodically well-founded research are lacking. The motivation of MEDICHI 2007 is to contribute towards making the 'history of informatics' an accepted science and a valued component of Informatics education and research.

The focus of the workshop is on the issues of the methodology and didactics of the history of informatics. The workshop will not be restricted to these issues only, and contributions on any other aspects of the history of informatics will be considered.

We expect original contributions in a length not longer than 10 pages. All papers accepted by the program committee will be printed in the conference proceedings. The best 5 papers will be considered for publication in a special issue of the IEEE Annals of the History of Computing.

MEDICHI 2007 sets the following three-fold goals:

1. Methodology

To pursue a history of informatics on a well-founded scientific basis is difficult. Informatics is broad; mathematical, technical, social, psychological, philosophical, economic, and ecologic aspects, amongst others, must all be considered, as must informatics' impact as an embedded component of so many other human activities. This many-faceted context of informatics calls for historical treatments which provide some form of unifying perspective which allows the reader to collate disjoint events and facts and gain understanding of hidden trends behind the obvious events on the surface.

The Workshop seeks original historical contributions, especially ones which provide a context or a vantage point from which to sense, categorize, measure or codify the diverse paths which constitute informatics and its role in our lives.

2. Didactics

How should we teach the history of informatics? What can this topic contribute to secondary and university-level education?

A poll made in 2006 by OEGIG showed that the history of informatics is hardly taught at Austrian universities; there is interest, but the body of supporting literature is too small.
It has been generally acknowledged – e.g. at the ISSEP-2005 Conference (Informatics in Secondary Schools - Evolution and Perspectives) – that a history of informatics could contribute much towards improving and rounding out a secondary-school informatics education. History, it was observed, can provide a bridge, or stepping stone towards understanding. And, history can provide the context which allows students to relate informatics to broader aspects of their own lives. This latter consideration may be especially decisive in attracting young women to the field of informatics; women tend, more than their male counterparts, to look first for the usage and purpose included in a syllabus for the teaching of such a history, contributions which provide insight as to which, at what educational level, and with which focus, historical aspects should be presented in our schools and universities; and contributions which can provide a base for further research on the didactical issues of a history of informatics.

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3. History of Informatics in Austria

Last but not least the MEDICHI Workshop plans to devote a special session to research on the Austrian history of informatics and to attract contributions which round out our knowledge of Austria's part in this amazing history. The OEGIG has already done much here but the Workshop hopes to complement their efforts.

The Workshop calls for papers which document some aspect of Austria's role in the field of informatics, or provide insight into the impact of informatics on the Austrian society. For this special session papers can be submitted also in German.

Ceremony of the Kempelen 2007 Award

Beside the scientific aims, the MEDICHI 2007 Workshop will be the venue for awarding the prizes of the 2007 Wolfgang von Kempelen Prize for Computing Science History.

MEDICHI 2007, Important dates

Submission of full papers	December 1, 2006
Notification of acceptance	February 1, 2007
Camera ready papers	March 1, 2007
Workshop	April 12 -13, 2007