

## **ICT Conferences Condensed To-Do List** (useful hints to the future Chairs)

The most important thing to run a successful ICT Conference is to find a good Administrative Assistant who should be involved early on in the planning stages. He/she will only need to work a few hours a week early on. However, when the abstracts are due and the fees start coming in he/she will be working 20 hours a week or more. Administrative Assistant will be paid from your conference fees. As the conference date approaches, more administrative support may be needed.

### **Important items and responsibilities:**

Determine a conference site (meeting rooms and hotels) and dates.

Determine Budget of Costs & Responsibilities

- ITS Membership Fees (currently \$50 for members and \$25 for students)
- Publishing and shipping CD & Book of Proceedings to conference attendees
- Conference Meeting Site (typically, you need to plan on running two parallel sessions and they should be well synchronized with exactly parallel time tables. You should also provide adequate space for the display of posters.)
- Meals & Coffee Breaks (determined by that year's ICT Organizing Committee)
- Banquet
- Favors and memorabilia (e.g., Briefcase, Notebook, Shirts, etc.)
- Conference Workers & Administrative Assistance
- Computer Facilities and Internet Access (for conference attendees at the conference site)
- Audiovisual Equipment, etc.

Determine conference fees (The ICT Chairman is responsible for all aspects of the conference including financial matters. The ITS and the ITS Board do not provide any assistance with the costs of the conference.) Recall that the ITS collects dues from the Conference Organizers that amount to \$50 for each participating member and \$25 for each participating student. The ITS is not responsible for covering any deficit from the conference.

Develop Accompanying Person Program & Fees

Prepare a Brochure for the conference.

Website: Set up a website for the conference. Assistance is available from the ITS webmaster, Cronin Vining. This should be as informative as possible. Cronin can also send email reminders via his ZT Newsletter. It is important to define all key deadlines. Specify the layout for Abstracts and supply a template as well as a sample copy. In discussions with the publisher (Proceedings of the ICT conferences are currently published by IEEE Press) determine the layout for the final form of manuscripts and supply a proper style file, template and a sample copy.

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Abstracts Due: Have abstracts due  $\approx$  4-5 months prior to conference. This will give an indication of potential attendance. Abstract acceptance within 2-3 weeks.

Manuscripts Due: Make the manuscripts due about 1 month before the conference. Distribute them and get them reviewed before the conference. Note: it is preferable to have the session chairs to review conference papers assigned to their session. Not only are they supposed to be experts in the topic of their session but this will also give them an opportunity to review the manuscripts and make recommendation for the Best Technical, Scientific, and Poster Paper Awards. Papers of non-native English presenting authors should be preferably refereed by a native English speaking scientist. Final manuscripts are due at conference.

Invitation Letter for Visa: Some participants will need letters of invitation in order to obtain visa (only original letters accepted, no FAX, no scans). Some embassies may even require date of birth and passport number of the invited person cited in the letter. This procedure may be lengthy, thus try to get the letters out well in advance of the conference. Be careful what you are promising to do for a conference participant so that no subsequent misunderstandings arise. Send the letters by registered mail.

Bank Account and Credit Card Service Contract: A bank account and a contract with major credit card companies need to be set up to receive credit card and bank transfer payments.

Book of Abstracts: Once the Abstracts are in, prepare a Book of Abstracts for the conference in which you also might like to include all necessary and useful advice for the conference participants.

Publishing: The organizers are responsible for providing both a CD and a book of the Final Proceedings. The ITS Board uses IEEE Press at this time. Work as early as possible on a budget with IEEE to ensure that **all costs** associated with the Proceedings are accounted for. These costs include shipping and handling charges and will come from the conference fees.

Early registration: Give early registration discount. This will enable you to have some working capital before the conference. Make the late or on-site registration about 25% higher than the early registration. Set the early registration deadline about two weeks after the abstract acceptance.

Awards: Plan time for the Awards ceremony. Also check the ITS website for responsibilities regarding the Goldsmid and Young Investigator Awards. The awards are paid for out of the ITS funds and **are not** the responsibility of the Conference organizers. For the Best Scientific, Technical, and Poster Paper Awards, develop a schedule for the selection of the awardees at the conference. The selection should be based on the **quality**

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of the **manuscript**. It is the responsibility of the Session Chairs to make an initial recommendation on the papers from their respective sessions (make the collected manuscripts available to the Session Chairs as soon as they are turned in). This responsibility should be clearly communicated to all Session Chairs via email (at the time they are asked to serve as session chairs) and also in a handout at the beginning of the conference. Session Chairs should be asked to turn in their recommendations as soon as possible and not later than the second day of the conference. From this short list of nominees, a committee composed of, for example, the Conference Technical Chair, the ITS President and a person designated by them will review the manuscripts nominated by the Session Chairs and select the awardees (if any). Once the awardees are chosen, the conference organizer needs to provide a wood-brass (or gold-colored eloxal) plaque for each one of the awardees (you might like to look at the plaque from the last conference). The Organizing Committee should develop an appropriate conference schedule when the winners of these awards could be announced. The most desirable time would be during the Conference Banquet. If time does not allow for this, then perhaps at the conference closing ceremonies.

Post Conference Duties: This will mainly entail the timely publication of the ICT Proceedings for that year. Set a deadline for the authors to return revised manuscripts to the ICT Organizing Committee. You will need administrative help for about 1 month or so after the conference. The more that can be handled before the end of the conference the better. Establish final ITS Membership Fees due to ITS and issue payment in a timely manner.

Financial Support: You will receive requests for student support and assistance for support from several scientists. This support is up to the ICT organizers to provide if they choose to. The ITS may provide a small amount of student support but this is not guaranteed. It is typical for 4-5 scientists to show up for the conference and have no funds to pay the fees. How this is dealt with is left up to the Conference Organizers.

ITS Board Member Election: Any vacant seat on the ITS Board is filled during the ICT Conference by conducting an election. The ITS Election Committee will work with the ICT Organizing Committee to schedule and conduct the election at an appropriate time during the Conference. The ICT Organizing Committee is expected to provide logistic support such as ballot papers, ballot boxes, etc. Details are to be worked out with the ITS Election Committee.

ITS Board Meetings: The ICT Organizing Committee is expected to provide a suitable meeting room (about 20 person seating capacity equipped with a projector) for the IST Board Meeting. Typically, the first IST Board Meeting is held on Sunday afternoon before the Conference Welcome Party and the meeting lasts 4-5 hours. Often, a second ITS Board Meeting is necessary (Wednesday) lasting about 3-4 hours and a room of similar size should be made available.

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### **Summary of Tips & Notes:**

Set up bank account for ICT funds

- Have a qualified person in charge of all money. The less hands to touch it the better.
- Keep a detailed account of all received and spent funds.

Choose Advisory Board members

Determine Budget

Enlist Financial Support

Choose facility

- Compose a list of hotels & room rates—attendees will book directly
- Have a list of amenities and all other highlights of the hotel.
- If possible, pick a hotel that has a conference center and banquet area on site. Otherwise, try to pick hotel accommodations and conference center locations fairly close to one another. This will make shuttling easier.
- Once the facility and hotel accommodations have been selected, finalize pricing and set up shuttle between sites if necessary.

Determine fees

Create website

Design Brochure

Set-up online registration

Send out invitation letters—Include hotel and conference center info w/ this once confirmation

Enlist Vendors for displays during conference

Create database of attendees using registration to obtain address info. etc.

Get quotes on entertainment & favors

Choose favors for gift bags

Choose entertainment

Choose menu's for meals

Get quotes on any equipment needed. This includes computers, fax machines, copiers, overhead projectors and the like. If these are on hand in your department then use them. If your university has technical support for any computer malfunctions this would be very useful.

Plan tours and other activities for guests to keep them relaxed and entertained during conference talks.

Schedule personnel to man registration tables and assist guests