

SIGART FY'06 Annual Report
July 2005 - June 2006
Submitted by: Maria Gini, SIGART Chair

The scope of SIGART consists of the study of intelligence and its realization in computer systems. These includes areas such as autonomous agents, intelligent user interfaces, knowledge discovery, human-language technology, cognitive modeling, knowledge representation, planning, scheduling, logic programming, problem solving, search, connectionist models, machine learning, robotics, and computer vision.

During 2005/2006:

1. Awards:

The 2005 SIGART Autonomous Agents Research Award was presented in 2005 to Dr. Milind Tambe of the University of Southern California, and in 2006 to Dr. Michael Wooldridge of the University of Liverpool, UK. The recipient of the 2005 award, Dr. Tambe, has made seminal contributions to the theory, applications, and software infrastructure in the area of teamwork. Dr. Tambe delivered an invited talk at AAMAS 2005 entitled "Conflicts in Teamwork: hybrids to the rescue." The recipients of the 2006 award, Dr. Wooldridge, has made seminal contributions to the logical foundations of multi-agent systems, especially to formal theories of cooperation, teamwork and communication., computational complexity in multi-agent systems, and agent-oriented software engineering. Dr. Wooldridge presented an invited talk at AAMAS 2006, entitled "With a Little Help from my Friends: On the Logic and Complexity of Cooperation." The ACM SIGART Autonomous Agents Research Award is an annual award for excellence in research in the area of autonomous agents. The award is given annually. Because of the change of date of AAMAS from July to May, this year we are reporting about two awards.

AAMAS 2005 was held in Utrecht (Netherlands) in July 2005 and AAMAS 2006 in Hakodate (Japan) in May 2006.

2. Conferences:

SIGART co-sponsored the conferences AAMAS (Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems), ASE (Automated Software Engineering), IUI (Intelligent User Interfaces), K-CAP (Knowledge Capture), and a new conference HRI (Human Robot Interaction), which was held in March 2006. In addition, SIGART cooperated with many conferences, such as AH (Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web-Based Systems), CIA (Cooperative Information Agents), ECAP (European Conference on Computing and Philosophy), IEA/AIE (Industrial & Engineering Applications of Artificial Intelligence & Expert Systems), and WI/IAT (Web Intelligence and Intelligent Agent Technology). AAMAS remains the largest conference co-sponsored by SIGART.

3. Educational Activities:

a. We awarded a number of scholarships to students to attend the conferences co-sponsored by SIGART. The amounts of scholarships varied from \$1,000 to \$15,000 per conference, depending on the conference size.

b. We co-sponsored, with AAI, the SIGART/AAI Doctoral Consortium. The Doctoral Consortium, held in conjunction with the AAI conference, provides an opportunity for a group of 12-15 Ph.D. students to discuss and explore their research interests and career objectives with a panel of established AI researchers. A similar Doctoral Mentoring program was held in conjunction with the AAMAS conference, both in 2005 and in 2006.

c. We co-sponsored, with IFMAS and ATAL, a Summer School on Agents in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 21-30 September 2005. The school is part of an effort to broaden the community in underdeveloped areas. A total of 68 people, mostly from Brazil and South America, attended the school.

4. We conducted a survey of our members.

The main purpose was to connect with the members, assess their interests, and find volunteers to help with SIGART related activities. The number of responses received was high (506), almost one third of our membership. The majority of respondents (79%) were regular members, mostly from the US (70%), but all regions outside the US, except Africa, were represented. Many (30%) have been members for more than 10 years. Many are also members of other societies, such as AAAI (43%) and IEEE (51%). The most important benefits for members are the conferences and access to the Digital Library, but many miss the Newsletter and would like to have it restarted. A large number (55%) is willing to volunteer 1-4 hours/month and some (20%) even 5-10 hours/month for SIGART activities. This gives us a large base to recruit volunteers to help restart the newsletter, update the web page, and, hopefully, have candidates to run for officers.

SIGART is run by an Executive Board, composed by Maria Gini, Chair, Kiri Wagstaff, Vice-Chair, and Robert St. Amant, Treasurer. SIGART was scheduled to have elections in 2005, but since none of the positions was contested, the SGB has decided instead to appoint directly the candidates.

Plans for the future include:

- * Reconnect with our members and increase services for members: After completing the members survey described above, we are currently asking members to volunteer for specific tasks, so we can update the Web page, add new contents to it, and, possibly, restart a Newsletter.

- * Continue supporting the communities of SIGART-sponsored conferences: SIGART is actively trying to expand the areas covered by co-sponsored conferences. This is now especially important considering that AAMAS is planning to become independent of SIGART and start a new organization. SIGART will continue to provide support to the communities represented by the SIGART co-sponsored conferences in a manner that is commensurate to the fees and surpluses contributed by the conferences.