Preface

The first International Conference on Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) was held ten years ago in Montreal (ITS '88). It was so well-received by the international community that the organizers decided to do it again in Montreal four years later, in 1992, and then again in 1996. ITS '98 differs from the previous ones in that this is the first time the conference has been held outside of Montreal, and it's only been two years (not four) since the last one.

One interesting aspect of the ITS conferences is that they are not explicitly bound to some organization (e.g., IEEE or AACE). Rather, the founder of these conferences, Claude Frasson, started them as a means to congregate researchers actively involved in the ITS field and provide a forum for presentation and debate of the most currently challenging issues. Thus the unifying theme is science. This year's "hot topics" differ from those in the earlier ITS conferences as they reflect ever-changing trends in ITS research. A few of the issues being examined at ITS '98 include: Web-based tutoring systems, deploying ITS in the real world, tutoring and authoring tools, architectures, and knowledge structure and representation.

In addition to representing a wide range of topics, ITS '98 is bringing together researchers from all over the world - Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, United States, Yugoslavia, and Texas (it's a country, right?). Overall, ITS '98 embodies 60 paper presentations, 25 poster sessions, 5 panels, and over 10 exhibits. Moreover, we've scheduled 4 workshops by well - known researchers (for August 16), 5 invited presentations from ITS notables (occurring throughout the conference), and various bonus activities, all with a special San Antonio flavor. Some of these include a bus tour of the city, the welcoming reception at the conference hotel, and a river barge ride along the San Antonio River (beside the world-renowned Riverwalk). Attendees may also visit the TRAIN Lab (home to a lot of ITS research) and attend the conference banquet, consisting of a Mariachi band, margaritas, and a huge Tex/Mex buffet.

The logistics involved with organizing a conference of this kind are non - trivial (for those who have not had the pleasure to do so before). However, we've been able to expedite large parts of the process by maximally exploiting computer technology - electronically handling advertising, submission and receipt of papers, registration, and so on. Many people have contributed to making the conference and proceedings reach fruition. First, we thank Claude Frasson for allowing us to host this conference. Second, we gratefully acknowledge the considerable contributions by the program chairs, Henry Halff and Barry Goettl, as well as the entire program committee. Third, we are indebted to the local organizing committee and production volunteers for their tireless efforts. Finally, we thank the different supporting organizations (AAAI, International AIED, SIGART and SIGCUE) as well as the sponsors of the conference (AFRL, Mei Technology, St. Mary's University, Galaxy Scientific, Command Technologies, and University of Texas at San Antonio).

If you are attending the conference, you'll find countless sources of stimulation. In addition to learning about the state of the art in ITS research, be sure to allot some time to cruise the Riverwalk, visit the Alamo (right across the street from the hotel), perhaps even venture into the Hill Country, visit Sea World, or cross the border into Mexico. Whatever your interests, the hotel office at the conference will be open and staffed much of the four days. Please feel free to stop in with any questions. A hot time is guaranteed!

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Carol Redfield

Val Shute

ITS '98 Conference Chairs

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San Antonio, Texas

May, 1998

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