

# Preface

Success and efficiency are the latest standards and scales of our society. Virtual surroundings and communication rooms, electronic portals and platforms are pushing us into a new world of personal and professional interaction and cooperation. The network to subdue violence is fragile and crumbly, tradition is no longer a power of our community.

What of leisure time, dreams, and fantasy?

What of education in the family, at school and at university?

Travelling round the world to develop yourself – how man becomes man: pleading for a new determination of the idea of education – a mission of past centuries inadequate nowadays?

Regarding September 11th last year, the conflicts and confrontations round the globe, and events in our direct surroundings these questions seem to be a cry at least to reflect upon what is happening around us and where we – all of us – still play an active role.

An International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs is like an island – is this a topic at all these days, is it worth discussing the area of ICT and the situation of people with disabilities, persons who are segregated from developing their personal and professional careers?

Indeed the biennial meeting has never included these actualities, but the basic idea behind ICCHP, starting in 1989, was to focus on these fringe groups and to offer a platform of exchange on all aspects of Human Computer Interaction and the usage of ICT for people with special needs. Assistive devices, accessibility and usability of ICT based topics, as well as special systems for people with disabilities are discussed.

Implications for the quality of life and for society in general should encourage a holistic approach. The orientation towards practice leads to an interdisciplinary exchange symbolized by the ICCHP-cube and invites all disciplines working in the field to take part and to discuss their ideas, approaches, and results. The general topics of

- Accessible Communication and Information
- Designing the Environment for All
- Medicine
- Assistive Technology
- ICT in Special and Inclusive Education

meet the concrete demands of people with special needs.

The vision and mission of those responsible for the conference and contributing to its success is, by stressing the special field of disability and ICT, to open the door to a humanistic, democratic, and social world, and to present models for the future. What applies to the periphery can be extended to apply to the whole, to open eyes, and to motivate the construction of networks for a common peaceful world.

The structure of ICCHP 2002 offers researchers and practitioners the opportunity to present their work and experiences and additionally invites specialists to set up, organize, and to chair Specific Thematic Sessions (STS).

Together with the tutorials and seminars of the pre-conference, the ICCHP 2002 will be a rich field of discussions and exchange. Participants should leave Linz with the intention of forming new active working groups, chat-rooms, and networks to deepen and broaden the themes discussed at the conference.

Let us all interact together in this way, transfer, and continue in order to make ICCHP a permanent platform of communication, apart from, but within the framework of our urgent world questions!

ICCHP 2002 was made possible by the expertise and the great enthusiasm of the General ICCHP 2002 Chair Harry Murphy, founder and former director of the Center on Disabilities (California State University, Northridge, USA) and of the Program Chairs – D. Burger (INSERM, France), A. Karshmer (Florida State University at Tampa, USA), A.M. Tjoa (Technical University of Vienna, Austria), R. Vollmar (University of Karlsruhe (TH), Germany).

The Publishing Chairs – J. Klaus, K. Miesenberger, W. Zagler – would especially like to thank the Program Committee for their participation and reviewing tasks.

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The daily and therefore biggest burden was to be undertaken by the Organizing Committee at the University of Linz.

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Their ideas, their improvisational talent, and above all, their friendliness and kind attitude while solving all sort of problems were all very much appreciated.

### **Roland Wagner Award**

We thank the Austrian Computer Society for announcing and sponsoring the *Roland Wagner Award on Computers Helping People with Special Needs*.

Prof. Dr. Roland Wagner is a pioneer in the field of ICT for people with disabilities and the founder of ICCHP. The Roland Wagner Award in the range of 3000 Euro will be given at ICCHP 2002 to a distinguished professional who has rendered outstanding service in the area of technology for people with disabilities.

## Sponsoring Organizations

We would like to express our gratitude towards all our partners, sponsors, and supporters.

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