Foreword

This book contains a collection of papers presented at a Research and Development conference of the South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists (SAICSIT). The conference was held on 13 & 14 November 1997 at the Riverside Sun, Vanderbijlpark. Most of the organization for the conference was done by the Department of Computer Science and Information Technology of the Vaal Triangle Campus, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education.

The programming committee accepted a wide selection of papers for the conference. The papers range from detailed technical research work to reports of work in progress. The papers originate mainly from Academia, but also describe work done in and for Industry. It is hoped that the papers give a true reflection of the current research scene in Computer Science and Information Technology in South Africa. Since one of the aims of the conference is Research development, the papers were not subjected to a refereeing process.

A number of people spent numerous hours helping with the organization of this conference. In this regard, we wish to thank the members of the Organizing committee, and the Programming committee who had very little time to screen the abstracts and compile the program. A special thanks goes to the secretary of the department, Mrs Helei Jooste, whose very able work was interrupted by the birth of her first child.
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List of Contributors

S.A. Ajila
Department of Mathematics and Computer Science
National University of Lesotho
Roma, 180
Lesotho

L. Baart
Department of Mathematics
Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE
PO Box 1174
Vanderbijlpark, 1900

L. Barnard
Faculty of Computer Studies
Port Elizabeth Technikon
Private Bag X6011
Port Elizabeth, 6000

S. Berman
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, 7701

L. Bester
Faculty of Computer Studies
Port Elizabeth Technikon
Private Bag X6011
Port Elizabeth, 6000

J.M. Bishop
Computer Science Department
University of Pretoria
Pretoria, 0002

L. Botha
Computer Science Department
University of Pretoria
Pretoria, 0002

R.A. Botha
Faculty of Computer Studies
Port Elizabeth Technikon
Private Bag X6011
Port Elizabeth, 6000

B. Braude
Software Engineering Applications Laboratory,
Electrical Engineering
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3
Wits, 2050

T. Breetzke
Faculty of Computer Studies
Port Elizabeth Technikon
Private Bag X6011
Port Elizabeth, 6000

C. Brink
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, 7700

M. Bruynooghe
Departement Computerwetenschappen
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Celestijnenlaan 200A
B-3001 Heverlee
Belgium

S. Buffler
University of Capetown
Rondebosch, 7701

M.A. Coetzee
Department of Mathematics
PU for CHE
Private Bag X6001
Potchefstroom, 2520

R. Cools
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Celestijnenlaan 200A
B-3001 Heverlee
Belgium

E. de Preez
Faculty of Computer Studies
Port Elizabeth Technikon
Private Bag X6011
Port Elizabeth, 6000

D.A. De Waal
Department of Computer Science and Information Systems
PU for CHE
Private Bag X6001
Potchefstroom, 2531

B. Deekenah
The Board of Executors

M. Denecker
Departement Computerwetenschappen
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Celestijnenlaan 200A
B-3001 Heverlee
Belgium

M. Dunley-Owen
Department of Information Systems
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, 7700

R. Fiqueira
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, 7701

A. Foster
Department of Computer Science
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, 7701

C. Gee
Software Engineering Applications Laboratory,
Electrical Engineering
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3
Wits 2050
THEORETICAL COMPUTER SCIENCE:
What is it all about, and is it of any relevance to us?

Chris Brink, University of Cape Town.

This is a quite general survey talk in which I present some of the infrastructure, activities and scientific flavour of what has, for better or worse, come to be called "Theoretical Computer Science". I will try to relate this to the South African situation, and will also give a case study of work being done here.