

Minutes of the joint VGTC Executive Committee Meeting (ExCom) and Vis Steering Committee Meeting (Vis SC) on Monday, June 6th in Dagstuhl, Germany

Prepared by Rachael Brady. Tuesday, June 7, 2005.

Edited by Hanspeter Pfister. Wednesday, June 15, 2005.

Meeting convened by Hanspeter Pfister at 7:45pm, adjourned at 10:45pm

Present: Hanspeter Pfister (HP), Torsten Moeller(TM), Greg Nielson(GM), Eduard Groeller(EG), Hans Hagen(HH), Daniel Keim (DK), Larry Rosenblum (LR), David Ebert (DE), Thomas Ertl (TE), Jim Thomas (JT), Arie Kaufman (AR) and Rachael Brady

Hanspeter passed around a proposed agenda. All approved. The meeting agenda is given below, which provides an outline for the minutes. Open action items are summarized in the appendix at the end of this document.

1) Review of Current Action Items

2) Administrative Reports (ExCom and Vis SC)

a) VGTC Chair Report.....	Hanspeter Pfister
b) Finance Chair Report	Loretta Auvil
c) Directors Report.....	Arie Kaufman
d) Publication Chair Report	Torsten Moeller
e) National Initiatives	Larry Rosenblum
f) International Liaison.....	Hans Hagen
g) Awards	John Staudhammer
h) Web Master.....	Dirk Bartz
i) VC for Conferences.....	Bill Ribarsky
3) In-Memoriam for Jane Wilhelms (Vis SC).....	Hanspeter Pfister
4) Proposal to subsidize Vis panel speakers (Vis SC).....	Victoria Interrante
5) Proposal for a visual analytics symposium (Vis SC).....	Jim Thomas
6) Reserve funds for conferences (Vis SC + ExCom).....	Hanspeter Pfister
7) Cooperation Agreement with Eurographics (ExCom).....	Hanspeter Pfister, Torsten Moeller
8) New Publications Model for VGTC (ExCom)	Torsten Moeller
9) Policies and Procedures Review (ExCom).....	Hanspeter Pfister

1) Review of Current Action Items

1) Action item: How do we solve the issue of having infovis papers in the vis program?
Assigned: *Daniel* and *Robert* will research and report back via email.

Report (from Robert):

Daniel, I, and others have discussed this numerous times. I think the general consensus is that the InfoVis Symposium is the better place to publish InfoVis papers. Thus the

benefit of trying to get InfoVis papers into the Vis Program is questionable. Some would like to have parallel tracks in the Vis Conference with InfoVis being a track, but many people have a vested interest in the InfoVis Symposium being a separate entity.

I think the best 2 options are

1. continue to have the InfoVis Symposium and the Vis Conference be consecutive days, or
2. reduce the Vis Conference to dual track and have the InfoVis Symposium run consecutively in lieu of the third track.

I see no need to abandon the way we are doing it. The continued refinements on that approach seem to be the right thing. Ultimately the 2 will merge somehow and sometime, I think.

Discussion:

DK: Discussed several times with different ideas. It seems InfoVis papers go to InfoVis anyway. This year the Symposia has 50% more submissions than last year. Dan did not get many InfoVis papers to review for Vis, so perhaps not that many were submitted.

EG: There were some.

DK: Should Vis have 1 track of InfoVis? If so, concentrate InfoVis track at start of Vis Conf.

HP: Have a dual track – infovis and vis combined

DK: Infovis wants one track only, but wants to keep acceptance high. Infovis community wants to keep the current method.

Resolution: Leave the current system in place

2) Action item: Coordination needs to be made with the Vis 2005 program chair to ensure infovis papers are properly solicited.

Assigned: * Matt Ward*

HP: Resolved. Action Item Closed.

3) Action item: Effort must be made to include the infovis liaison in the Vis Committee decision-making process. Pak Wong is the Vis 2005 infovis liaison.

Assigned: *Baoquan Chen* and the Vis 2005 committee.

HP: Resolved. Action Item Closed.

4) Action item: Include an infovis rep with in the tutorial and workshop committee.

Report: (10/14/04): Sue Havre is on the tutorial committee

HP: Resolved. Action Item Closed

5) Action item: What are our other financial options (WRT outsourcing our IEEE finances)?

Assigned: *Ben, Loretta, and Bill*

(no reply)

HP: Action Item Still Open

6) Action item: A better training manual needs to be made for the conference chair.

Should committee assignments be made earlier (at least one year in advance)?

Assigned: *Jim Thomas, Hanspeter, Kelly, and Bill* will meet over email to think about creative ways to improve this process.

(no reply)

HP: Action Item Still Open

7) Action item: Publish a list of the conference committee duties to the vgtc web site.

Assigned: *Dirk Bartz* will request this information from Hanspeter.

New Status: Rachael Brady will send a draft of committee duties to Dirk and Hanspeter.

HP: Action Item Still Open

8) Action item: Send infovis symposium committee duties and infovis schedule to Hanspeter.

Assigned: *Tamara* and *Matt*

(no reply)

HP: Action Item Still Open

9) Action item: Do we want a vgtc newsletter (on the web page)? This needs to be investigated.

Assigned: * Dirk, Torsten, Daniel, Vicki* (make a suggestion to vgtc as to what will make the best sense)

Report from Dirk:

The current status is that we try to implement a scheme like dbworld (visworld), where every subscriber (we would invite the vgtc members) can submit a message to the system which distributes it to all other subscribers. The current candidate for hosting that service is Chris Johnson (who kind of volunteered after asking at last Vis, once he knows how much effort is needed).

Discussion:

DK: Dirk's idea is like an automated mailing list. If someone says something wrong then they are taken off the list. The issue is who is hosting this?

Resolution:

HP: This action item is closed because the report has been made. The ExCom will take this under advisement. If we choose to move forward, we might host it at vgtc.

10) Action item: Do we want a vgtc calendar (on the web page)?

Assigned: *Dirk* (talk to Helwig about linking to his calendar)

Report from Dirk:

Helwig is fine if we link his calendar additional to our calendar of vgtc events. Once the updated website is online (see separate item), the links will be available.

Discussion:

LR: Is there anything on Helwig's calendar that is inappropriate for the vgtc to be advertising?

EG: The calendar has non-vis items on it.

HP: But it is a service to our community to inform them of non-vis items.

DK: We could always take the link off the vgtc web page if anything goes wrong.

DE: It is the best calendar out there.

Resolution:

HP: Resolved – use Helwig's Calendar.

(note: later in the meeting this topic again arose and it was suggested that someone in vgtc curate our own calendar)

11) Action item: Do we host data and contests on the vgtc web page? What are the advantages and disadvantages of hosting this service?

Assigned: *Dirk*

Report from Dirk:

There will soon be an updated website of vgtc. no new design, but a few more buttons, namely a download area. in the beginning, the download area will contain the public vgtc documents. right now, all minutes are public, even the steering committee ones. I am not sure if there is actually a formal decision by the ExCom what should be public, so I suggest to discuss that in Dagstuhl.

The download area will also contain a link list to the various data repositories on vis data, including the contest data. Once we know if we can move all contest datasets to the computer.org server (we need some space to accommodate that), we will move the contest data of previous contests to our web server.

I think there basically two advantage for hosting the datasets at vgtc:

1. we probably can maintain their availability for a longer time
2. organizers of the contest are not bothered where to host the data

Drawbacks: well, we have to see if computer.org actually can host this quantity of data.

Discussion:

HP: All meeting minutes, after approval by the committee, are public.

... more discussion about open and closed sessions...

HP: If the Vis contest data is being hosted then should we also plan to host the InfoVis contest data?

DK: Info Vis is already being hosted, but I'm not sure for how long

Resolution:

HP: Motion to host the Vis Contest at vgtc, seconded by TM. Passes Unanimously.

12) Action item: What is the best way to organize and present the papers electronically before their publication date and in a way that minimizes replication.

Assigned: *Torsten *and* Dirk

Report from Torsten:

I will be working with the designers to have this integrated into the web pages of the conference this year. However, ideally, we want a system where only our members get early access to the files. Going through IEEE will mean several weeks or month of delay. We'd have to create an alternative system, which is up to Dirk. Perhaps Dirk has better ideas. For comparison - see: <http://vis.computer.org/vis2004/DVD/contents.htm>.

Report from Dirk:

One discussed bonus for vgtc members was the access to the proceedings (even before the conference). Essentially, there are three ways to do it:

1. Through the computer society (cs) digital library. This is probably the easiest way, once we can establish how vgtc members could access these proceedings for free (may be we can learn that from siggraph, where older proceedings are available for members). As Torsten pointed out, this can take time until cs moves. also the current speed how the vis proceedings move into the digital library does not suggest that this can be achieved *before* the conference. The advantage for this solution would be the accessibility for previous conferences.

2. Through the conference website. Either linked through the program, or like Torsten demonstrated it for vis 2004: <http://vis.computer.org/vis2004/DVD/contents.htm> this would certainly be a quick solution, but the access has to be managed; may be through the vgtc login. This is not clear how that can be worked out.

3. Through the vgtc website. if the demo version for vis2004 is prepared, we can also move that to the vgtc website, or have a link from there to the conference website. Same issue with the access rights. There will be certainly not a complete new system for the vgtc website, only for a already prepared one, like for vis 2004.

Discussion:

TM: This can be done, it's easy to do and it's okay with Tom Fink from the IEEE Computer Society Publications.

AK: What is the purpose of the electronic library? It would not be searchable, correct? So this is just a collection of the PDF's.

TM: Correct.

DE: For clarification, please make sure that this idea has the approval of Tom Williams and Angela Burgess of the IEEE Computer Society Publications office.

HP: One concern is that patent policies make the early release of publications a sensitive issue.

DE: Correct. Having an article publicly available as much as a month early could create a problem for patents.

HP: If we do this, we must send email to all authors that their papers will be publicly available at an earlier date.

TM: There is a real possibility that we could put the papers out 1-2 weeks ahead of the conference start date.

AK: We must think of who gets access. Perhaps just those who are registered for the conference.

HP: And IEEE CS members.

TM: For this year, it is probably not possible to create individual logins.

DE: How about one login that is sent out to all members?

LR: Be sure it's only members, not the general public.

HP: We can probably do this. I can send Dirk an excel spreadsheet of all vgvc members. I will push this through.

TM: Okay – so just to be clear – before the conference this site will be open only to vgvc members. After the conference it is not free to the world. Who should have access?

... more discussion about membership ...

HP: I would like to motion that we put the Vis papers online. Access will be only to vgvc members before the conference and authors are given the option to opt-out of this early public release.

JT: What is the advantage of releasing these early? It's certainly a logistical challenge.

DE: SIGGRAPH did this and will not do it again. They had some issues with an author and a patent.

HH: I think this is a great idea. I would like to see the papers before flying across the ocean.

LR: Are we providing anyone an incentive not to attend the Vis conference by doing this?

DE: Quite the opposite. Other conferences do this and it builds interest in the conference.

TM: If we do this, what about InfoVis papers? Tutorial notes?

DE: Don't do tutorial notes.

TM: Excluding something is hard.

HP: Just put an empty index page in the tutorial directory to hide them.

.... More tutorial discussions and InfoVis approval discussions

Resolution:

HP: I would like to make a motion that we put the Vis and InfoVis materials (except tutorial notes) on the vgvc website. We should do this as soon as we can but not more than a month before the conference, pending approval of the InfoVis steering committee. Seconded by Jim Thomas. Motion Approved. Action Closed.

13) Action item: Need for a consistent Vis paper deadline (between Vis and infovis).
Assigned: *Vis steering committee* to discuss with *Matt* and *Tamara*

Resolved: The common deadline is April 20.

2) Administrative Reports

2a-b) VGTC Chair and Finance Report

HP: Last year we under spent our budget. This year IEEE merely matched our spending from last year. They did not take into account the excellent financial return from the VR conference.

LR: IEEE has a formula. We should insist on this being used in our favor.

HP: Action Item for Loretta – Insist vgtc's budget be reflected in accordance to the IEEE formula.

..... Discussion about Budgets ...

HP: How can we use our budget better to increase the value of our membership base?

DE: One idea would be for the vgtc to help pay for the Visualization special issue of the TGVG.

.... LR and DE discuss ...

HP: Any idea what we should sponsor as a policy?

DE: How about student volunteer scholarships? Or, we can support students who are not student volunteers. Call it the vgtc scholarship.

.... DK, JT, AK, HP and DE discuss ...

HP: Action Item for Daniel Keim and David Ebert to look into creating a student support policy. Report to HP by email.

2c) Directors Report (no report)

2d) Publication Chair

TM: Basically, we're unhappy with IEEE explorer except that they show our pages as black and white scanned in pages. Torsten is working with Tom Fink. The problem is that our PDF files are not to a certain standard. I'm working on it. Any ideas from the committee would help.

DE: The Computer Society digital pages are correct. The problem is the IEEE pages.

HP: Action Item to HP: Find out who to contact at IEEE to resolve the Explorer issue.

2e) National Initiatives (Report during conference on Wed)

JT: We are well staged.

HP: The TC could help fund JT's Visual Analytics book

JT: Perhaps some support at the \$1k level would be good. I'll find the rest.

HP: Vgtc will support the NIH/NSF Report publication.

2f) International Liaison

HH: Basically, I have two issues: Visa Problems and Conferences that Overlap.

... some discussion about visa problems and who resolves them each year. The point arose that conference chairs usually have to write a letter to help international attendees....

HP: It should be the duty of the International Liaison to have long term Visa memory for conference chairs. Hans Hagen is now responsible to fill that role.

HH: We also have issues with conference overlap between US and International calendars.

LR: Our conference is dominant, therefore we should set our date and expect others to accommodate. Generally, Vis is in Oct, EuroVis is in April and Dagstuhl is in May.

HP: Should we have the calendar of **our** sponsored events on **our** web page?

... more discussion about conference scheduling and that usually it's due to hotel availability ...

HP: Motion: The International Liaison of the vgtc is responsible for staying aware of conference conflicts and coordinating with other conferences. We are primarily concerned that there be no conflict between UIST, Vis & InfoVis and EuroVis.

AK: Second

Passed.

JT: Motion: All conference planning for VR and Vis must be done two years in advance to help avoid conflicts.

LR: Second

... Discussion ...

Note: It is Bill Ribarsky's responsibility for making this motion move forward.
Unanimously Approved.

2g) Awards

LR: The VR awards were Mel Slater and Mark Bolas. We informed Mel Slater 3 months in advance, but he was not able to attend the conference and receive his award.

HP: Action Item to John Staudhammer – Award decisions must be made 6 months prior to the award to ensure proper time to inform the recipient.

AK: Perhaps Awards needs a vice chair.

HP: John Staudhammer should select a vice chair

... discussion about possible web link to allow the public to nominate potential awardees...

Action Item: Larry Rosenblum will contact John to ask if the ability to nominate should be made public and ask if John would like to appoint a vice chair.

2h) Web Master (no report)

HP: Action Item to Dirk: Please update the web page with the names of the VR awardees.

2i) VC for conferences

HP: Report from Bill Ribarsky - VR 2007 will be in Charlotte. Doug Bowman will be the lead chair. We will look for a West coast venue for VR08.

HP: Vis 2007 is potentially in California

3) Memorial for Jane Wilhelms

HP: Someone from the Vis community (Alex Pang for Allen Van Gelder) should write memorial. I will take care of this.

4) Proposal to subsidize Vis panel speakers

... much discussion about fairness, precedent, etc ...

AK: Motion: All panelists who choose not to register for the conference get a 1-day complimentary pass that does not include conference materials.

TE: Second

Majority approved. Motion passed.

5) Proposal for a visual analytics symposium in conjunction with InfoVis and Vis

JT reviewed his motivation for the Analytics proposal.

JT: I must establish a conference in any case. I would prefer to do this in concert with Vis and InfoVis. My idea is to put a symposia into the plans for 2006.

AK: What are the details? 1-day? 2-day?

LR: Let's approve this idea on principle and deal with the details later.

DE: Motion – Approve the proposal for the 2006 conference. Have the Vis and InfoVis steering committees to discuss the details with Jim Thomas.

AK: Second.

Motion Approved (Jim Thomas abstained)

HP: Action Item for JT: Talk to Amitabh as soon as possible.

6) Reserve funds for conferences

... some discussion.. idea closed.

HP: Action Item for HP and Loretta – consider a proposal to find a mechanism to build a trust fund.

7) Cooperation Agreement with Eurographics

HP; I have some background information and can send this to the whole committee. I'm asking for feedback.

TM: Tom Fink has agreed to present the proposal to IEEE.

HP: After we hear back on IEEE's response, I will send the proposal to the whole committee.

AK: What about formats? Eurographics and Vis do not have compatible formats.

HP: We would use the Eurographics format.

... TM showed images of the NVAC report cover, the Point-Based Graphics 2005 cover, the Volume Graphics 2005 cover and the CGI 2005 cover...

TM: Does the committee like this? Can we move forward with a "unified look" for all vgtc conferences?

HP: We propose to use this design for all conferences: Vis, InfoVis, and VR.

HP: Motion: Use Proposed Cover Design for all vgtc conferences

DE: Second

Unanimously approved.

8) New Publication Model for VGTC

HP: We need to find Torsten's successor. We are taking advantage of him. I have asked Torsten to think "out of the box" for a solution. Torsten has replied. (notes on his proposal were passed around).

... Torsten made a report on the expense of publications by Eurographics...

Torsten's idea is to sell the proceedings for a slightly higher price than cost and use the residual \$\$ to fund a 1/2 time position.

HP: Just be aware that this discussion is going on.

TE: FYI, the Eurographics cost (e40) is more than just printing costs. It is a full package – review submission system, all the way to porting to a digital library.

DE: Mike Baldwin at IEEE has taken over the management of IEEE publications. He has done an excellent job and has totally turned the division around.

HP: We have grown too large for this to be a volunteer position.

HP: AI to Torsten and Loretta and HP: Make a proposal before the Vis05 vgtc meeting to either 1) make a 1/2 time position or 2) consider an IEEE computer society alternative.

JT: And have them send it via email if it's ready early.

9) Policies and Procedures Review

HP: We need to create a committee to review the bylaws. We need to come up with a charter for all the steering committees that the vgtc will enforce. This includes the VR SC, the Vis SC, and the InfoVis SC.

DK: All Steering committees need to be a part of the process.

HP: Okay – let's appoint one member from each SC and the Chair of VTGC. I propose Thomas Ertl, Daniel Keim, and Arie Kaufman.

HP: Action Item to TE, DK, AK, and HP – create a proposed steering committee charter for all vgtc steering committees.

HP: Action Item for HP – Update the vgtc bylaws to a current state and propose the changes by Fall ExCom meeting.

New Business

DK: I'd like to propose the idea that we create an award for the paper which made the biggest impact from the conference of 10 years ago.

HP: Good idea. Action Item to DK – make a proposal to all three steering committees. This can be just a short email.

DK: Just one more item. As a lead reviewer in both venues, I found the InfoVis and Vis papers submission/review interfaces were so different that it was confusing.

HP: Action Item – Steering Committees should encourage Vis and InfoVis paper chairs to talk to each other. The 2006 Vis and InfoVis papers Chairs must have a meeting at the 2005 Vis conference to resolve this issue.

***** Meeting Adjourned at 10:45pm *****

Next Meetings are:

Vis SC is Monday, Oct 24th

VGTC ExCom is Tuesday, Oct 25th

Hilton Minneapolis

1001 Marquette Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN, 55403-2440, USA

(Note: AK is unable to attend either of these dates. Perhaps he can teleconference into them).

Appendix A

Action Items

1. What are our other financial options (WRT outsourcing our IEEE finances)?
Assigned: **Ben, Loretta, and Bill**
2. A better training manual needs to be made for the conference chair. Should committee assignments be made earlier (at least one year in advance)?
Assigned: **Jim Thomas, Hanspeter, Kelly, and Bill** will meet over email to think about creative ways to improve this process.
3. Action item: Publish a list of the conference committee duties to the vgtc web site after approval by the Vis steering committee.
Assigned: **Rachael Brady** will send a draft of committee duties to **Dirk** and **Hanspeter**.
4. Action item: Send infovis symposium committee duties and infovis schedule to Hanspeter.
Assigned: **Tamara and Matt**
5. Action Item: Host the Vis Contest data and submissions at vgtc website
Assigned: **Dirk**
6. Action Item: Put the Vis and InfoVis materials (except tutorial notes) on the vgtc website. We should do this as soon as we can but not more than a month before the conference, pending approval of the InfoVis steering committee.
Assigned: **Hanspeter** to get approval and **Dirk** to make it happen.
7. Action Item: Insist that the vgtc's 2005 budget be in accordance to the IEEE formula.
Assigned: **Loretta and Hanspeter**
8. Action Item: Look into creating a student support policy. Report to Hanspeter by email.
Assigned: **Daniel Keim and David Ebert**
9. Action Item: The vgtc needs position duties description draft.
Assigned: **Hanspeter**
10. Action Item: Create a vgtc newsletter.
Assigned: **Dirk**
11. Action Item: Create a Calendar on the vgtc website.
Assigned: **Dirk**

12. Action Item: Find out who to contact at IEEE to resolve the Explorer issue.
Assigned: **Hanspeter**
13. Action Item: Make sure all future conference planning for VR and Vis is done two years in advance to help avoid conflicts with international conferences
Assigned: **Bill Ribarsky**
14. Action Item: Award decisions must be made 6 months prior to the award to ensure proper time to inform the recipient. Please revise procedures.
Assigned: **John Staudhammer**
15. Action Item: Contact John Staudhammer to ask if the ability to nominate should be made public and ask if John would like to appoint a vice chair.
Assigned: **Larry Rosenblum**
16. Action Item: Update the web page with the names of the VR awardees.
Assigned: **Dirk**
17. Action Item: Invite someone from the Vis community (Alex Pang for Allen Van Gelder) to write a memorial for Jane Wilhems and present it at the keynote address.
Assigned: **Hanspeter**
18. Action Item: Talk to Amitabh as soon as possible about a Visual Analytics Symposia in conjunction with the 2006 Vis conference.
Assigned: **Jim Thomas**
19. Action Item: Consider a proposal to find a mechanism to build a trust fund.
Assigned: **Hanspeter and Loretta**
20. Action Item: Make a proposal before the Vis05 VGTC meeting to either 1) make a 1/2 time position or 2) consider an IEEE computer society alternative.
Assigned: **Torsten, Hanspeter and Loretta**
21. Action Item: Create a proposed steering committee charter for all vgtc steering committees.
Assigned: **Thomas Ertl, Daniel Keim, Arie Kaufman and Hanspeter**
22. Action Item: Update the vgtc bylaws to a current state and propose the changes by Fall ExCom meeting.
Assigned: **Hanspeter**
23. Action Item: Make a proposal to all three steering committees about an award for the paper from 10 years ago that made the biggest impact. This can be just a short email.
Assigned: **Daniel Keim**

24. Action Item: Steering Committees should encourage Vis and InfoVis paper chairs to talk to each other. The 2006 Vis and InfoVis papers Chairs must have a meeting at the 2005 Vis conference to resolve this issue.

Assigned: **Vis SC and InfoVis SC**