2001 International Joint Conference on Neural Networks

Vol. 2 of 4



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Welcome to IJCNN '01

On behalf of the members of the Organizing Committees, we would like to welcome everyone to the first International Joint Conference on Neural Networks of the new Millennium. The conference this year is sponsored by the International Neural Network Society, in conjunction with the IEEE, and returns to the site of the IJCNN two years ago. Our venue, Washington, D.C., offers an abundance of interesting sites and activities for our attendees and their accompanying friends and family, although without the spectacular mountain scenery provided for us in Como, Italy last year. In addition, we have reworked the format of the conference to reduce the number of parallel sessions in an effort to allow attendees to investigate presentations and discussions outside of their normal disciplines. In order to provide this new format, we have featured the Poster Sessions in a standalone presentation schedule, combined with the refreshments, and with no competing oral presentations. We hope that this structure will serve to encourage broader and inter-disciplinary discussions at those sessions.

Our featured speakers this year include Prof. Teuvo Kohonen and Prof. Bernard Widrow, along with Dr. Paul Stewart. A major announcement concerning new NSF funding initiatives will be made in one of the special presentations. In addition, we have introduced two new topics into special sessions at this conference. One on Quantum Computing will explore that topic and applications to quantum neural computing, the other will be a competition based upon analysis, estimation and prediction of time series for challenging problems.

At this time, we would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of a small team of people who have worked to organize and schedule the 2001 conference. When we undertook the task of serving as General Chairs, we recognized that the work could not be accomplished without key support from INNS members and the entire Program Committee including teams from Talley, Community of Science and Omnipress. We are especially indebted to Dr. Danil Prokhorov who worked long hours on the massive task of managing collection and reviews of papers and scheduling the presentations at the conference. Dr. Prokhorov also single-handedly worked to organize the Special Sessions, in effect handling the duties of Technical Chair and Program Chair. Prof. George Lendaris, as well as key members of the INNS Board of Governors, devoted considerable time and effort to helping us get the conference organized along the lines of past INNS/IEEE collaborations. Our friend and colleague, Dr. Lee Feldkamp, in a freelance role, suggested many strategies we implemented in putting together the conference program. Dr. Anya Tascillo served very well as the Publicity Chair and helped organize the Conference Website. She also initiated and carried out the T-shirt project. Prof. Carlo Morabito organized the tutorials on Sunday, while Prof. Larry Medsker took care of the local arrangements. Dr. Harold Szu, took the initiative in organizing the nominations and voting for this years Award Recipients. Many thanks to all of them!

We look forward to an exciting and productive conference.

Ken Marko

Paul Werbos

General Co-Chairmen

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David Haberstroh, Meeting Manager International Neural Network Society 19 Mantua Road Mount Royal, NJ 08061 856-423-7222 856-423-3420(fax) innsmtg@talley.com

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Letter from the INNS President

On behalf of the International Neural Network Society, the IEEE Neural Network Council, and all the other sponsoring organizations -- which comprise virtually all of the major Neural Network professional organizations -- I wish to welcome you to the 2001 International Joint Conference on Neural Networks (IJCNN'01).

A great challenge lies ahead for those of us interested in the continued development and evolution of the (artificial) neural network computational paradigm -- or more generally, Computational Intelligence. While many of us in attendance at the IJCNN are engineers, computer scientists, physicists, mathematicians, statisticians, etc., we must maintain awareness that the key inspiration, insights and motivators for Computational Intelligence -- be it neural networks, fuzzy logic, genetic algorithms, etc. -- come from the study of biological systems and from the study of cognitive acts of animals and humans. Let us recall, while it is true that we learned how to fly only after we stopped imitating how birds fly, we learned to ask the important application-oriented questions of nature about how birds fly only after the first successful man-made aircraft were flown. It is important that a viable community of researchers and developers continue to function in a creative, interactive way to provide an environment for the possibility of learning more and more about and from the infinitely complex functioning of biological brain, and to translate this to applications of benefit to humankind.

It is troublesome to observe a decreasing attendance at conferences such as the IJCNN, and decreased subscriptions to the major NN and related journals. Paradoxically, however, this may be attributed to the SUCCESS of the NN computational paradigm in applications. Indeed, 10-15 years ago, the focus of funding from the commercial world contributed to enhancing the theoretical and engineering basis of the NN computational paradigm and figuring out what it was good for. In such a milieu, those interested in this emerging technology were looking for information in any venue they could: e.g., the big NN conferences and the major NN journals. In recent years, however, due to a plateau related to introduction of new theoretical foundation material, the focus of that community has turned to using the existing foundation for solving real engineering problems, and with great success!

There is evidence that neural network and other computational intelligence methods are being embedded into commercial applications in large numbers, with significantly reduced "fanfare" about it -- just as the embedding of conventional (Von Neuman) computer technology is no longer touted in any specific way. Reporting of such successful applications may now occur at conferences and in professional journals that focus on the application area -- be it financial systems, control systems, data mining, pattern recognition, signal processing, etc., etc. The resulting proliferation of venues for meeting, sharing, and discussing application-specific aspects of the NN technology appears to have had the above mentioned impact on attendance at the IJCNNs and the subscriptions to the major NN journals.

HOWEVER, we of the Neural Network community (and more generally, the Computational Intelligence community at large) must beware! It is important that a viable community of researchers be maintained who focus on continued study of the biological exemplar.

Application of the Computational Intelligence technologies to more and more complex and interesting problems stands to benefit substantially from fuller and fuller understanding of the natural biological neural networks. Research on the biological and cognitive aspects must continue, else the basis upon which the applications are to be developed will dry up. It is up to each of us to persuade our respective managements to continue funding an expansion of the underlying knowledge, and to enhance collaboration with the biological and cognitive oriented researchers.

While we are here at this conference, let us dialog about these issues, and expand the general awareness of the importance of encouraging an expanding collaboration between those interested in engineering and mathematical theory and ultimate applications, and those who will obtain applicable fundamental knowledge from the existing biological implementation of Intelligence.

Enjoy the conference, George G. Lendaris, President, INNS

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Welcome from the IEEE/NNC President

On behalf of the IEEE Neural Networks Council, it is my pleasure to welcome all participants to the 2001 International Joint Conference on Neural Networks to its beautiful and historical venue, Washington, D.C.

Once again, the Neural Networks Council is happy to cosponsor this important event with the International Neural Networks Society. We earnestly hope that you will benefit from IJCNN 2001 and that you will enjoy the many sights and attractions of the capital of the United States of America.

I would also like to acknowledge the cooperation of a vast array of international societies and institutions, including the European Neural Networks Society, the Japanese Neural Networks Society, the International Society for Optical Engineering, the American Association for Artificial Intelligence, the Russian Neural Networks Society, the Cognitive Science Society, and the Asia Pacific Neural Networks Assembly.

I want to congratulate the General Co-Chairs of IJCNN 2001, Ken Marko and Paul Werbos, for their efforts in putting together an event encompassing numerous tutorials, special sessions, plenary lectures, and technical competitions. Special thanks go to Danil Prokhorov, Technical Program Chair, Catherine Myers, and Mo-Yuen Chow, Technical Program Vice Chairs for having put together a comprehensive program spanning the many facets of the state of the art in neural-networks concepts and methods.

The strong, continued growth of our Council in recent years has made possible the implementation of several initiatives intended to benefit the technical communities within its scope of interest. Particularly noteworthy among these initiatives are student support programs, including Summer Research Grants, and financial help to attend major conferences such as IJCNN 2001. We look forward to continue and expand the scope of our technical and support activities to the scientific and engineering community.

We also look forward to the continuation of this series of conferences in coming years. The next edition of IJCNN, which will be part of the 2002 World Congress on Computational Intelligence (WCCI 2002), will encompass IJCNN 2002, the 2002 IEEE International Conference on Fuzzy Systems (FUZZ-IEEE 2002), and the 2002 Congress on Evolutionary Computation (CEC 2002). This will be the third time that these conferences are held together, following successful World Congresses in Orlando, Florida, in 1994, and Anchorage, Alaska, in 1998. The General Chair of WCCI 2002, Dr. David B. Fogel, together with the Vice-General Chair, Professor Mohamed A. El-Sharkawi, and the General Chairs of its component Conferences: Professor C. Lee Giles (IJCNN 2002), Professor Toshio Fukuda (FUZZ-IEEE 2002), and Professor Xin Yao (CEC 2002) join me in inviting you to participate in this encompassing event.

In closing, I would like to thank all INNS and IEEE volunteers that have contributed to the success of IJCNN 2001, and all participants whose support makes possible the continued activities of our Societies.

Enrique H. Ruspini President

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Table of Contents

IJCNN'01 Welcome from Conference General Chairs	
IJCNN'01 Organizing Committee and Cooperating Societies	. iv
IJCNN'01 International Program Committee	v
IJCNN'01 Letter from the INNS President	vii
2001 INNS Officers and Board of Governors	viii
IJCNN'01 Welcome from the IEEE/NNC President	. ix
2001 IEEE Neural Networks Council Officers	x
IJCNN'01 Exhibitor Contact Information	. xi
Author Index	Al

Special Note: We found that some of the files submitted to Omnipress had blurred images and other defects. Files were used exactly as they were supplied. Omnipress made every effort to assure that all files submitted would be published in these Proceedings. However, not published were 18 files (paper 33, 50, 75, 112, 126, 156, 207, 238, 263, 281, 296, 362, 401, 432, 496, 498, 526, 566) due to technical difficulties with PS/PDF formats of the files. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and advise you to contact authors of unpublished papers directly to receive copies of their papers (e-mail addresses are provided instead of page numbers for unpublished paper).

IJCNN'01 Proceedings Organized by Session

Monday, July 16, 2001		Paper Number	
	Oral	Poster	
9:30am-11:30am-Oral Sessions Biological Functions, Session 1: Single Neuron, Small Circuit and Language Models Mathematical Foundations, Session 1: Neurocoding and Information Representation Learning Algorithms, Session 1: Supervised Learning Artificial Systems in Hardware, Session I Special Session I: Environmental Data Processing and Interpretation by Means of Artificial Neural Networks	1-6 7-11 12-16 17-22 22.1-22.8	61-63 64-74 75-83 84-92	
1:00pm-2:30pm-Oral Sessions Biological Foundations, Session 2: Cortical Networks Mathematical Foundations, Session 2: Optimization and Complexity Analysis Learning Algorithms, Session 2: Unsupervised Learning Intelligent Control, Session 1: Neurocontrol and System Identification Special Session 2: Neural Network Projects and Precollege Students	23-27 28-31 32-37 38-41 41.1-41.4	93-100 101-107 108-119 120-130	
2:45pm-4:15pm-Oral Sessions Pattern Recognition, Session 1: Automatic Target Recognition and Tracking Mathematical Foundations, Session 3: Neurodynamics, Stability and Nonlinear Analysis Applications, Session 1: Telecommunication, Military and Aerospace Applications Intelligent Computations, Session 1: Evolutionary Computations and Programming	42-45 46-50 51-55 56-60	131-139 141-151 152-154, 140 155-160	
Tuesday, July 17, 2001			
9:30am-11:30am-Oral Sessions Architectures, Session I Neural Systems, Session I: Vision Learning Algorithms, Session 3: Unsupervised Learning Intelligent Control, Session 2: Reinforcement Learning and Adaptive Critics Special Session 3: Neural Network Competition	161-165 166-170 171-175 176-181 181.1-181.3	224-227 215-223 228-238 239-242	

1:00pm-2:30pm-Oral Sessions	102 107	242.250
Neural Systems, Session 2	182-185	243-258
Architectures, Session 2: Associative Memory	186-188 189-191	259-264
Learning Algorithms, Session 4	192-195	265-273 274-285
Intelligent Control, Session 3: Neurocontrol and System Identification	172-173	214-203
2:45pm-4:15pm-Oral Sessions		
Intelligent Computations, Session 2: Fuzzy and NeuroFuzzy Systems	196-200	286-293
Applications, Session 2: Service Sector and Environmental Applications	201-205	294-299
Learning Algorithms, Session 5: Support Vector Machines	206-210	300-304
Pattern Recognition, Session 2: Speech and Handwriting Recognition	211-214	305-313
Special Session 5: Quantum Neural Computing (Part II)	214.1-214.3	
	,	
Wednesday, July 18, 2001		
0.20 11.20 01 Gardens		
9:30am-11:30am-Oral Sessions Data Analysis, Session 1: Temporal Processing	314-318	374-386
Architectures, Session 3: Global Representations	319-323	387-393
Learning Algorithms, Session 6: Supervised Learning	324-330	394-406
Applications, Session 3: Financial Applications	331-335	407-413
Special Session 6, Global Brain Modeling(Part I)	335.1-335.4	407-415
•		
1:00pm-2:30pm-Oral Sessions		
Data Analysis, Session 2: Data Mining and Compression	336-340	414-428
Architectures, Session 4: RBF and other Local Representations	341-345	429-437
Learning Algorithms, Session 7: Supervised Learning	346-350	438-442
Applications, Session 4: Industrial Applications Special Session 7: Global Brain Modeling (Part II)	351-354 355-355.1	443-450, 613
Special Session 7. Global Brain Modeling (Fact II)	333-333.1	
2:45pm-4:15pm-Oral Sessions		
Data Analysis, Session 3: Image and Signal Processing	356-359	451-453
Intelligent Control, Session 4: Robotics	360-363	454-460
Intelligent Computations, Session 3: Evolutionary Computations and Programming	364-368	461-464
Applications, Session 5: Industrial Applications	369-373	465-471,
Special Session 8: Artificial Neural Networks and Knowledge Management: Industry	700.1	610-611
Applications	700.1	
Thursday, July 19, 2001		
9:30am-11:30am-Oral Sessions		
Intelligent Computations, Session 4: Hybrid Systems and Software	562-566	473-482
Learning Algorithms, Session 8: Support Vector Machines	567-572	483-487
Applications, Session 6: Biomedical Applications	573-578	488-495, 612
Special Session 10: Morphological Neural Networks	579-581.5	•
1.00mm 2.20mm Oral Sections		
1:00pm-2:30pm-Oral Sessions Intelligent Computations, Session 5: Computational Intelligence and Intelligent Agents	582-585	496-503
Learning Algorithms, Session 9: Supervised Learning	586-590	504-518
Applications, Session 7: Biomedical Application	591-595	519-528
Special Session 11: Nonparametric Information Theoretic Algorithms for Learning (Part I)	595.1-596	
2:45pm-4:15pm-Oral Sessions	F07 /01	F20 F25
Architectures, Session 5: Global Representations	597-601	529-535
Data Analysis, Session 4: Image and Signal Processing	602-605	536-550
Pattern Recognition, Session 3: Speech and Handwriting Recognition Special Session 12: Nonparametric Information Theoretic Algorithms for Learning (Part II)	606-608 608.1-609	551-561
operations for Learning (Fart II)	000.1-003	

Volume 1 Monday, July 16, 2001

Biological Foundations, Session 1: Single Neuron, Small Circuit and Language Models Chairs: John Taylor and Michael Denham

1.	A Synaptic Learning Rule Based on the Temporal Coincidence of Pre- and Postsynaptic Activity	1
3.	Rate Dynamics in Integrate-and-Fire Neurons: Two Regimes and Multiple Time Scales	7
5.	Learning Word Pronunciations Using a Recurrent Neural Network Matthew J. Radio, James A. Reggia, Rita S. Berndt	11
61.	A Hybrid Neural Network and Virtual Reality System for Spatial Language Processing	16
62.	Synchronization of the Neural Response to Noisy Periodic Synaptic Input in a Balanced Leaky Integrate-and-Fire Neuron with Reversal Potentials Anthony N. Burkitt	22
63.	Dynamical Threshold for a Feature Detector Neural Model	28
	hematical Foundations, Session 1: Neurocoding and Information Representation	
7.	New Geometrical Concepts in Fuzzy-ART and Fuzzy-ARTMAP: Category Regions Georgios C. Anagnostopoulos, Michael Georgiopoulos	32
8.	A Categorical Semantic Analysis of ART Architectures Michael J. Healy, Thomas P. Caudell	38
9.	A Novel Time-Based Neural Coding for Artificial Neural Networks with Bifurcating Recursive Processing Elements Emilio Del Moral Hernandez	44
10.	Information Transfer through Classifiers and Its Relation to Probability of Error Deniz Erdogmus, José C. Principe	50
11.	Separation of Deterministic and Stochastic Neurotransmission Andrzej Pacut	55
64.	A Comparison Among Output Codification Schemes Carlos Hernández-Espinosa, Mercedes Fernandez-Redondo	61
65.	Generalization in the Hopfield Model Leonid B. Litinskii	65
66.	Agent-Environment Approach to the Simulation of Turing Machines by Neural Networks	71
67.	Kolmogorov Learning for Feedforward Networks Roman Neruda, Arnošt Štedrý, Jitka Drkošová	77
68.	A Self-Organization Model of Feature Columns and Face Responsive Neurons in the Temporal Cortex	82

70.	Linear Separation Theorem in Distributional Clustering	88
72.	Design of Neural Networks for Multi-Value Regression	93
73.	Emergence of Horizontal Cells Receptive Fields Spectral Properties by De-Correlation of Cones Spectral Response Functions Michael U. Iniushin, Alexander A. Stankevich	99
74.	How does Our Neural System Represent an Object in Brain (Recognition-By-Element)	103
	ning Algorithms, Session 1: Supervised Learning :: Lee Feldkamp	
12.	Neural Network Training with the nprKF Lee A. Feldkamp, Timothy M. Feldkamp, Danil V. Prokhorov	109
13.	The Need for Small Learning Rates on Large Problems	115
14.	A Complex EKF-RTRL Neural Network Pedro Henrique Gouvêa Coelho	120
15.	Training Product Unit Networks using Cooperative Particle Swarm Optimisers	126
16.	Fast Gaussian Process Regression Using Representative Data	132
75.	Backpropagation Algorithm with Sinusoidal Activation and Positive Couplings	om
76.	Number of Hidden Nodes for Shape Preserving ANN Representation of a Curve	138
78.	Comparative Analysis of Backpropagation and Extended Kalman Filter in Pattern and Batch Forms for Training Neural Networks Shuhui Li	144
79.	Universal Learning Networks with Multiplication Neurons and its Representation Ability	150
80.	A New Adaptive Learning Algorithm Using Magnified Gradient Function	156
81.	Input Data Clustering to Improve Neural Network Performance Min Su, Mitra Basu	160
82.	Multilayer Feedforward Weight Initialization Carlos Hernández-Espinosa, Mercedes Fernández-Redondo	166
83.	Temporal Differences Learning with the Conjugate Gradient Algorithm	171

Artificial Systems in Hardware, Session 1

17.	Comparative Study of Implementing ICNNs on FPGAs Ai Boon Lim, Jagath C. Rajapakse, Amos R. Omondi	177
18.	Massively Parallel Inner-Product Array Processor	183
19.	Implementing a Fuzzy System on a Field Programmable Gate Array	189
20.	A Mixed Mode Self-Programming Neural System-on-Chip for Real-Time Applications	195
21.	A Silicon Retina Calculating High-Precision Spatial and Temporal Derivatives	201
22.	An Effective Test Method for Digital Neural Networks Érika Cota, Luigi Carro, Marcelo Lubaszewski	206
84.	Hardware Implementation of an On-Chip BP Learning Neural Network with Programmable Neuron Characteristics and Learning Rate Adaptation	212
85.	Single-Electron Latching Switches as Nanoscale Synapses	216
87.	On-Chip Learning of FPGA-Inspired Neural Nets Bernard Girau	222
88.	Specifications and FPGA Implementation of a Systolic Hopfield-Type Associative Memoryloan Z. Mihu, Remus Brad, Macarie Breazu	228
89.	Microprocessor Implementation of Fuzzy Systems and Neural Networks	234
91.	A Modified Algorithm for the Quadratic Assignment Problem Using Chaotic-Neuro-Dynamics for VLSI Implementation Kentaro Tanaka, Yoshihiko Horio, Kazuyuki Aihara	240
92.	On Higher Order Noise Immune Perceptrons Valeriu Beiu -	246
Inter _I Organ	al Session 1: Environmental Data Processing and pretation by Means of Artificial Neural Networks nizers: Roberto Tagliaferri, Salerno University, Italy, resco Carlo Morabito, Reggio Calabria University, Italy	
22.1.	A Neural Network Based Identification System for VIRGO Seismic Noise	252
22.2.	Artificial Neural Systems for Verglass Forecast M. Costa, E. Pasero	258
22.4.	Daily Rainfall Forecasting Using an Ensemble Technique Based on Singular Spectrum Analysis Francesco Masulli, Daniela Baratta, Giovambattista Cicioni, Leonard Studer	263
22.6.	Use of Neural Network to Improve the Dispersion Models Performances: Proposal of an Advanced Methodology	269