December 1996 vol. 15, no 4 (No. 43) 2500 copies

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Dear Readers!

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year !

We can proudly see the IFSR- Newsletter as a well established source of information. We are in fact celebrating the 15th year of its publication (first issue in 1981!). It also means that the IFSR itself looks back at a proud history of 16 years in the service of the systems community.

I would like to thank Paul d.P. Hanika (✞ 1985) , the founding editor and also Dr. Stephen Sokoloff, who followed Paul, and also helped me to continue.

Some innovations have been established: We print part of the edition in the USA reducing the 'time-to-market' for our overseas members. We owe thanks to Gordon Rowland who has undertaken the job of printing and mailing in the USA.

The membership of IFSR is growing and we are happy to present a long account by one of our latest members (the AIRS). Although this article is prima vista a description of the AIRS, it is actually an excellent description of the state of systems movement. I want to thank Gianfranco Minati for this excellent contribution.

Yours sincerely

Gerhard Chroust
Systemtechnik und Automation
Johannes Kepler University Linz, 4040 Linz, Austria

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

and a

HAPPY NEW YEAR 1997

Standing at the threshold of a new year offers an opportunity of reflections upon the achievement of the past and contemplation of future work and new challenges. Continuously striving for "quality" seems to characterize our work and service of the last couple of years. Exceptionally quality is well demonstrated in each and every issue of Systems Research - the official journal of IFSR - under Mike Jackson, Editor-in-Chief and our Vice-President. The same high quality is reflected in our ever more informative Newsletter, under the editorship of Gerhard Chroust, who also serves as our Secretary/Treasurer. The Fuschl Conversations continue to explore and bring to life significant theoretical and practical issues. Our membership has grown significantly... But "growth" means only an increase in "quantity". And the challenge we face in the new year is to transform such "growth" into an increase in "quality".

It is aspiring for quality that has guided us to initiate the establishment of several working committees, expected to address programmatic and organizational issues that will add substance to the life of the Federation. In our next Newsletter we shall report on the status of the committees. We hope that our member organizations will offer their contribution by participating.

Another challenge is to ensure the long-range viability of Systems Research, the journal of our Federation. It can be "ours" only if each and every member organization supports it. The support means that each member organization calls upon it membership to subscribe for the journal. It is the best means to keep up with new and emerging developments in systems scholarship and systems applications. The membership of member organizations receives the journal at highly reduced rate. The royalties from the publisher provide resources to IFSR that are invested in service to our member organizations.

As we approach 1997, members of our Executive Committee pledge continuing commitment to high quality service and wish you all success for the coming year.

Bela H. Banathy

NEW TRENDS

AIRS: ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA PER LA RICERCA SUI SISTEMI

(Italian Assoc. for Research on Systems)

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AIRS acts in the context of the international systemic movement and collaborates with the most important research institutes in this field. AIRS is a non-profit, cultural association. AIRS strictly collaborates with the Fondazione Barbarini e Centoni per la Correlazione to design, to carry out, and to use methodologies and tools based on Systemics (for Education, Management, Ethics, Computer Science, Psychology, as well as Linguistics and Medicine). AIRS plans to activate and to support the research and the interaction between people with different disciplinary knowledge, also at different levels, and aims to explore, to identify and to induce inter- and trans-disciplinary views.

CULTURAL BASIS AND PURPOSES

In the history of human activity there have been different moments and stages during which interest has moved from objects to the relationships between them, also to their interdependence as a fundamental source for explaining behavior and for increasing the effectiveness of our actions. Human knowledge moved from focussing on the concept of Set to focussing on the concept of System. In the scientific and technological domain we are able to realize and to recognize the following steps:

- from the classic monodisciplinary research have emerged the topics of self-regulation, at the beginning materialized in mechanical apparatuses (Watt's automatic engine) and later in electrical and electronic ones (feed-back and black-box concepts, belonging to control theory);
- the concept of "field" has emerged as well as the interest for the study of interactions;
- thanks to cybernetics, the concept of regulation has been expanded, for example to the physiology, and to problems such as the ones dealing with learning and perception;
- information theory has studied the interaction as an exchange of information among objects, particularly because, there being they more and more computer-based, the ability to process data, to communicate, and to store (text, sound, picture) is increasing;
- biology requires theoretical frameworks compatible and consistent with organicism and complexity. In psychology the Gestalt concept has been introduced: Sets and Systems emerge as different constructs, not to be confused, because in this case a lack of effectiveness results as a consequence;
- the General System Theory or Systemics rises with peculiar finality to identify and to study interactions and analogies (isomorphisms) between disciplines independent of their particular applications: the theoretical centrality of the human being, as a crucial and active part of logical devices, is outlined (from randomness to arbitrariness).
- the formalization processes gives birth to mathematical tools such as the ones of the mathematics of complexity, fuzzy sets, neural networks, ...);
- in physics the topics of complexity emerge. They call for concepts based on Systemics: openness, self-organization, and attractors in the logical sense, not only in the thermodynamic sense.

TOWARDS SYSTEMICS

The distance between the Monodisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, and Trans-disciplinary approaches illustrates the emergence process of the Systemic view:

- the monodisciplinary vision constitutes the most primitive approach to problems. It is based on separation, isolation and specialization. The ideal framework is based on the focus on a single object, and on the focus on single separate components. The cultural and scientific world is based on objectivism. The need to overcome specialization doesn't mean to deny or to reject them but it concerns both their utilization and the form of their generation. We could say that a new discipline, "a discipline of the disciplines", emerges (a kind

of "hosting connective tissue"). The process of changing from the classic and linear disciplinary vision to the systemic one has various steps:

- the multidisciplinary vision is based on disciplines, each one close to the other, managed by a director with an objective (i.e. a manager). For example, in a project focusing on telecommunication, according to the classic managerial approach, a set of disciplines such as engineering, jurisprudence, economics and physics has to be managed. But disciplines communicate with one another only by referring to each single problem;
- the interdisciplinary vision is based on interacting disciplines, engaged in a mutual dialogue, one's own problems becoming also the problems of one other with the same happening for relevant solutions. There is, at least, a communication of methodologies between them. Interdisciplinarity is often a cultural view enabling the design based on a synthesis of single disciplines, thus going beyond multidisciplinarity;
- the transdisciplinary vision doesn't focus on a kind of objectivistic "cognitive anxiety", but is based on the theoretical centrality of the human being. The shift is from an "aware physics" to the "awareness of the physics", as from randomness to arbitrariness. The focus of an integrated cognitive activity is not anymore on the search for a kind of Mephistophelean and objectivistic knowledge. The poor effectiveness of this cognitive strategy and of the produced knowledge has been realized. The uniqueness of the human being has been recognized as generating theories and reality more than just discovering them. The human being is not anymore just a passive, silent, and "noise-generating" observer but a producer of reality. In this framework achievements, unimaginable when using the classical disciplinary approach, are designable and achievable, such as in education, computer science, psychology, management, medicine and semantics processing.
- The systemic view is often not made explicit in the field of humanistic and artistic activities. First of all, because of a reduced hegemony will of the single disciplines, and secondly, because of their lack of explanatory and theoretical will. However organicism, holism, and systemic view are at least recognizable, even if they are not explicit, in such disciplines as arts, philosophy, history, anthropology, archeology, jurisprudence. Ways of thinking, not emerging from the classical scientific view, may be considered within the framework suggested by the comparison of "cognitive arts" vs. sciences.

The focus on the centrality of the human being, viewed at least as the unique "device" able to produce knowledge and to design usage for it, is due to theoretical and not only practical reasons. The shattering of the whole into disciplines is strongly related to reducing the mind to brain activity. We can recognize an analogy between the distance from brain to mind, and the distance between sets and systems: set of words and literature; set of musical notes and music; set of single players and team; set of workers and firm... .

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

For contacts and information see Calendar of Events

ISSS-Conference 1997

Systems Thinking, Globalization of Knowledge, and Communitarian Ethics

July 22-25, 1997
Seoul, Korea

1. Application of Systems to Development of Social Science Research

a) Epistemology of Natural Sciences and Scientific Analysis of Social Phenomena
b) Methodological Bridge between Systems Sciences and Social Science Research
c) Dynamic Model for the Analysis of Social System

2. Recent Development of Systems Sciences and Applied Research

a) Chaos, Order, Non-equilibrium Thermodynamics and Complex System
b) Self-Organizing System and Complex Biological, Physical and Evolutionary Theory
c) Self-Organizing System and Macro-Micro Theory of Social/Biological System
d) Entropy as Evolution and Historical Development

3. Systems Sciences and Prediction of Technological Society in 21st Century

a) Development of Industrial Technology and Globalization of Systems Sciences
b) Innovation in Information Technology and Structural Change of Economic System
c) Development of Information Technology and Structural Change in Society
d) The Long Term Prediction of Structural Change in Information Society

e) Transformation Mechanism of Industrial Organization in Information Society
f) The Impacts of Information Technology on Korean Economy and Social Structure
4. Globalization of Systems Science Knowledge
a) Development of Educational System and Innovative Designing in Information Society
b) Systematic Linkage between Educational System and Curriculum
c) Systematic Utilization of Research Information in Systems Sciences and System Designing for Global Cooperation
d) Diffusion of Systems Knowledge, and Micro-electronic networks among Nations

SCI'97

World Multiconference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics

Caracas, Venezuela
July 7-11, 1997

Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics (SCI) are becoming increasingly related to each other and to almost every scientific discipline and human activity. Their common feature, transdisciplinarity, characterizes them and generates strong relations among them and with other disciplines. They interpenetrate each other integrating a whole that is permeating human thinking and practice. This phenomenon induced the Organization Committee to structure SCI'97 as a multiconference where participants may focus on an area, or on a discipline, while maintaining the possibility of attending conferences on other areas or disciplines. This systemic approach stimulates cross-fertilization among different disciplines, inspiring scholars, generating analogies and provoking innovations; which, after all, is one of the very basic principles of the systems movement and a fundamental aim in cybernetics.

MAJOR THEMES

- Conceptual Infrastructure of Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics
- Information Systems (ISAS '97)
- Control Systems
- Managerial/Corporate Systems
- Human Resources Systems
- Natural Resources Systems
- Social Systems
- Educational Systems
- Financial Systems
- SCI in Psychology, Cognition and Spirituality
- SCI in Biology and Medicine
- SCI in Art
- Globalization, Development and Emerging Economies

Both printed and electronic versions (CD-ROM) of the SCI- 97 proceedings will be available..).

CBMS'97

10th IEEE Symposium on Computer-Based Medical Systems

June 11-13th 1997

Maribor, Slovenia, Europe

The symposium is intended for engineers and computer scientists in industry and academia who are developing Computer-Based Medical Systems (CBMS). Particular emphasis is placed on the issues associated with the development and manufacture of robust safety critical medical systems and the current regulatory environment for those devices. The symposium provides an excellent opportunity for government regulators to interact with the medical device industry. Papers regarding device and software safety in the design of systems, as well as software development practices, methods, and tools are encouraged. Reports concerning applications in progress are also encouraged. Medical device engineers, medical professionals, biomedical engineers and computer scientists who are working on medical computing projects are especially encouraged to submit papers describing their work. CBMS combines technical papers, poster presentations, panel discussions and research laboratory tours. Main areas:

- knowledge needed for successful application and development of computer based medical systems,
- computer based medical systems and ultrasound,
- perspectives of using knowledge based concepts in computer based medical systems

Special topics:

- Basic knowledge
- Management process
- Medical System Reliability and Safety
- Information Systems
- Software Development Processes, Methodologies and Tools

- Image Processing and Analysis
- Signal Processing
- Knowledge Based Systems
- Prosthetic Devices
- Cardiovascular Technologies

Informatique et biologie

due modèle à l'outil

Course Postgrade en Informatique 1997
Jan - Decembre 1997

Dept. d'Informatique
Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne

Organizers: Prof. D. Mange, E. Sanchez, Dr. P. Bucher, Dr. V. Joneneel, Dr. P. Marchal, Dr. M. Tomassini
Details: EPFL-Dept. d'Informatique
IN-Ecublens, CH-1015 Lausanne
tel. (021) 693-42-39, fax (021) 693 66 25
email: cpit@di.epfl.ch

The PQS-Team Room

PROJECT REPORTS

Do Meetings have to be Inefficient and Boring?

The electronic meeting PQS-Team

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Meetings are still held in the same way as in Mediaeval times. Participants sit around a table and the tools are the same as in medieval times, perhaps augmented by an overhead projectors.

Further, many of these meetings are considered to be inefficient and lost time. Little computer support has - up to now - been provided. But such meetings are necessary for creative problem solving and for subtle negotiations. Proximity of the partners, the atmosphere, the interaction and the resulting spontaneity are needed.

Based on previous experiences an electronic meeting room (called PQS-Team-Room for : **p**roductivity, **q**uality and **s**peed) has been built at the Kepler University Linz.

The main advantage of the meeting room shows during the meeting itself:

Brainstorming: All participants can enter their ideas in parallel.

Controlled parallel discussion: A discussion similar to a Delphi-survey can be performed.

Voting: Complicated balloting methods, open and secret, can effectively be performed in 'real-time'.

Information Retrieval: every Participant can retrieve supporting evidence from his/her own information base. This information can be shown to the other participants.

Also during preparation of the meeting the systems offers a very useful feature:

be discussed off-line via the provided software

Prediscussed agenda: items and comments can be added to the agenda, thus reducing the time needed for this in the actual meeting.

Support for arranging time and place of the meeting, the agenda, the list of invitees, the writing and distribution of the minutes is also available.

Besides support of actual decision meetings some more creative uses of this kind of meeting room could be:

- Software Process Evaluation, e.g. ISO-9000
- Requirements Analysis
- Group Examinations

We believe that an electronic meeting room might provide some dramatic changes in the future. It is up to us to identify the potential, utilize this technology and accept the challenge.

Chroust, G. and Pamminger A. PQS-Team-Room, Need or Annoyance? in: Chroust, G. and Doucek, P. (eds.): IDIMT-96 : 4nd Interdisciplinary Information Management Talks, ,Oldenbourg 1996, 140-148.
Lewe, H. and Krcmar H.: Die CATeam Raum-Umgebung als Mensch-Computer Schnittstelle.- in: Friedrich J., Rödiger K.H. (eds): Computergestützte Gruppenarbeit (CSCW) - Fachtagung, Universität Bremen 1991 , Teubner Stuttgart 1991, pp. 171-182,
Nunamaker, J.F. and others: Electronic Meeting Systems to Support Group Work , Comm ACM vol. 34 (1991) no. 7, pp. 40-61

Austrian Society for the History of Informatics founded

In order to preserve the traces and foundations of computer science, this society has been founded in Vienna in October 1996. Its main aim is to

- secure existing artifacts related to the early history of computer, informatics and related subjects.
- register and archive such artifacts,
- provide a basis for research and
- present them to the public in the form of a museum

Further contact: Gerhard Chroust, Systemtechnik und Automation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, 4040 Linz/Austria, e-mail: CHROUST@SEA.UNI-LINZ.AC.AT, Tel:+43-732-2468-865, Fax:+43-732-2468-878

NEWS FROM THE BOOK MARKET

Proceedings

ISAS '96 PROCEEDINGS
(Information Systems Analysis and Synthesis

980 pages hard copy and/or CD-ROM version with search and hypertext features:
Miss Natalie Buitrago
70501.2363@CompuServe.com

News from the IFSR

News from the IFSR

Dear Members!

1996 has been successful year for the IFSR. We now have 28 members. We have again had a Board Meeting at the EMCSR 1996 in Vienna. We also had a Strategy Meeting on Saturday, April 13 - a novelty. Many good ideas and suggestions were put forward.

The Fuschl Conversation 1996 was a full success, more lively than ever.

With respect to the organization of the IFSR we are pursuing the committee structure already announced to you. Feel free to contact your officers for cooperation.

We also took the chance of presenting the aims and purposes of the IFSR at the EMCSR-Conference in Vienna and at the ISSS-Meeting in Budapest in September 1996.

As usual I repeat my request for more information on YOUR society. Share it with the other members of IFSR!

Hoping for a further fruitful communication

Gerhard Chroust

OUR MEMBERS

We welcome the

International Institute of Informatics and Systemics (Venezuela)

as a new new member of the IFSR!
Founding Members: Nagic Charly Callaos Farra, Bekis Margarita Sanchez Rodriguez.
In the next issue we will report about the association.

AIRS: Assoc. Italiana per la Ricerca sui Sistemi

(Italian Assoc. for Research on Systems)

A detailed account can be found under the heading 'New Trends'

Polish Systems Society

Statement of Scope

* general methodology of interactive systems research and inquiry
* systems strategy and multidisciplinary integration
* methodology and modeling of evolutionary integrated systems
* technological and associative systems
* humanization of systems, and systems philosophy
* creative design and systems education
* adaptive and autonomous systems
* cybernetic and autopoietic systems
* information systems and computer systems
* philosophical systems and methodologies
* systems development of knowledge engineering and artificial intelligence
* artificial neural systems, biological and medical systems
* social, juridical and organizational systems
* mathematical methods for cybernetic and systems research
* ecological systems

Contact: Mieczyslaw Bazewicz
Technical University of Wroclaw ,
50-370 WROCLAW, POLAND,
tel: (48-71) 20-35-89, fax: (48-71) 22-36-64,
e-mail: bazew @ pwr.wroc.pl

FUSCHL-CONVERSATION

Do not forget your application for the 1998 Fuschl-Conversation (Sunday, April 19 (evening) to Friday, April 24 (noon) 1998 at the Hotel Seewinkel at Fuschl am See, Austria (20 km from Salzburg). Deadline: end of February 1997, send applications to: *Bela H. Banathy, 25781 Morse Drive, C armel, CA. 93923 USA, tel/fax +1 408-625-3178, e-mail: BHBANATHY@aol.com*

Amendment to IFSR Newsletter 15(3), p. 1:
Prof. Yong Pil Rhee is President of the Koreans Society for Systems Science Research and alsosince September President of the ISSS. *Dr. Harald Linstone* became chairman of the Board of Trustees of the IS SS.

WHAT'S NEW IN "SYSTEMS RESEARCH"?

The quarterly *Systems Research*, the official journal of the IFSR, is published by John Wiley and Sons. Papers for publication and subscription requests should be sent to:

Professor M.C. Jackson
University of Humberside
Cottingham Road
Hull. HU6 7RT, United Kingdom
tel: +44 1482 440550 Ext. 3720
fax: +44 1482 445715

Contents of vol. 13, no. 4 (1996)

Research Papers:

On pairs and trios: the smallest social systems by R L Ackoff

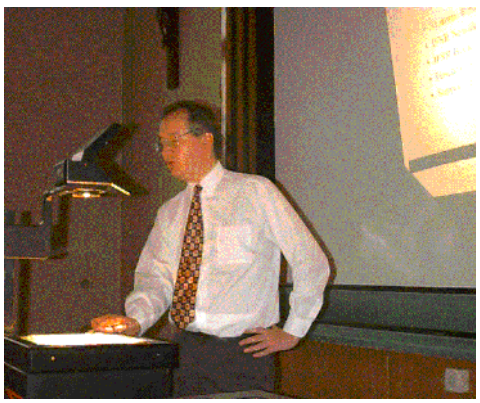
Maintaining foreign subsidaries' ability to self-organize in the Japanese market by C F Benton and K Kijima

Paradigm shift in management by P N Murthy

A comparison of Maturana's autopoietic social theory and Giddens' theory of structuration by J Mingers

Research Note:

A systems profile: John P Van Gigch (1930 -) by J P Van Gigch



M.C. Jackson at the EMCSR-Meeting, Vienna April 12, 1996

IMPRESSUM: Mediuminhaber, Herausgeber, Satz und Layout: Int. Federation for Systems Research
Für den Inhalt verantwortlich: Prof. G. Chroust, Kepler Universität Linz, 4040 Linz, Druck: Druckerei Bad Leonfelden GmbH. & Co. KG, Bad Leonfelden (U)

Calendar of Events

Title	Date and Place	Further Information
Abbreviations: CfP, CfA: Call f.Papers/Abstract, FP: Final Paper due, <No. nn>: more details in issue.nn		
2nd Workshop of the IIGSS <No 40>	Jan 9-11, 1997 San Marcos, Texas *CfA: June 10, 1996* *FP: Oct. 15, 1996*	Dr. Yonghao Ma, Department of Mathematics, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas 78666, USA, ma@iigss.math.swt.edu
EUROCAST '97: 6th Intern. Conference on Computer Aided Systems Theory and Technology <No. 15/2>	Feb. 24-28, 1997, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria *FP: Apr. 30, 1997*	R.Morena-Diaz, CIICC, Universidad de Las Palmas d.GC, Spain, tel: +34-2845-87-50, fax -85, e-mail: roberto@grumpy.dis.ulpgc.es
Problems of Action and Observation	April 1-4, 1997 Amsterdam	Center for Innovation and Co-operative Technology, Valckenierstraat 65, NL-1018XE Amsterdam, fax: +31 20 525 5778 , email: PAO@phys.uva.nl
CBMS'97 : The 10th IEEE Symposium on Computer-Based Medical Systems	June 11-13, 1997 Maribor, Slovenia, CfA: expired, FP. Jan 31, 1997	Dr. Peter Kokol, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Smetanova 17, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia, fax: +386 62 225 013 or +386 62 226 232 tel: +386 62 221 112, email: cbms97@uni-mb.si, www: http://www.uni-mb.si/~cbms97
Systems for sustainability: people, organizations and environments, 5th Int. Conf. of the United Kingdom Systems Soc.	July 7-11th, 1997 Milton Keynes, UK	Hammerwood Gate, Kents Hill, Milton Keynes MK7 6HP, UK, tel: 44 1908 83494, fax: 44 1908 834948, uksconf@dmu.ac.uk
SCI'97 - World Multiconference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics <No. 15/4>	July 7-11, 1997 Caracas, Venezela	Int. Institute of Informatics and Sistemics, 14269 Lord Barclay Dr., Orlando, Fl, USA tel/fax: 1-407-8566274, email:iiis@aol.com http://www.callaos.com/SCI 97
ISSS-Conference 1997: Systems Thinking, Globalization of Knowledge, and Communitarian Ethics <No. 15/3>	July 22-25, 1997 Seoul, Korea CfA: Feb.15, 1997 FP: Apr. 15, 1997,	Kenneth D. Bailey, Dept. of Sociology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA , tel. 1-310-825-1313, fax 1-310-206-9838, bailey@soc.sscnet.ucla.edu,Linda Peno, ISSS, PO Box. 6808, Louisville, KY 40206-0808, tel: 1-502-899-3332, fax 1-502-897-2461
CASYS'97 :1st Int. Conference on Computing Anticipatory Systems <No. 15/3>	August 11-15, 1997, LIEGE (Belgium), CfA: March 1, 1997 FP: June 1, 1997	Dr. Ir. Daniel M. DUBOIS, asbl CHAOS, Institut de Mathématique, Université de Liège, 15, avenue des Tilleuls, B-4000 LIEGE, Belgium. fax: /32/4/3669489, dubois@lema.ulg.ac.be
ICEE-1997 - Int. Conference on Engineering Education: Progress through Partnership	Aug. 14-17, 1997 Chicago, USA CfA: Oct. 15, 1996 FP : April 1, 1997	Joun Mead, Coal Res. Center MC 4623, Southern Illinois Univ. at Carbondale, Carbondale, IL 62901, USA, tel. 1-618-536-5521, fax: 1-618-453-7346, jmead@siu.edu
EUROMICRO Workshop on Computational Intelligence	Sept. 3-4, 1997 Budapest, Hungary CfP: April 1, 1997	Bernd Reusch, University of Dortmn, Dept, of Computer Science, D-44221 Dortmund, Germany, tel: +49-231-9700952, reusch@ls1.informatik.uni-dortmnd.de http://LS11-www.informatik.uni-dortmund.de/EUROMICRO
SOCO'97: 2nd Int. ICSC Symposium on Soft Computing (Fuzzy Logic, Artificial Neural Neworks, Genetic Algorithms)	Sept. 17-19, 1997 Nimes, France CfA: Jan 31, 1997 FP: May 15, 1997	ICSC Canada, PO Box 279, MILLET, Alberta ToC 1Z0, Canada tel: 1-403-387-4329, fax -3546, email: icsc@compusmart.ab.ca, http://www.compusmart.ab.ca/icsc/soco97.htm
IDIMT 1997, Interdisciplinary Information Management Talks	Oct. 15-17, 1997 Zadov , Cech Republic CfA: March 1997, FP: June 1997	Gerhard Chroust, Systemtechnik, Kepler Universität Linz, 4040 Linz, tel: +43-732-2468-866, fax -878 email:Chroust@SEA.uni-linz.ac.at