You and the Future

A Working Retirement: Fulfilling Quality Lives for an Aging Population

SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The workshop "You and the Future" focuses on the challenge of how to improve the quality of life for the elderly in an environment where longer life and better health combine to offer the opportunity for professional life also after retirement.

IEEE members include many engineers working in, or having worked in, projects oriented to enhance human life, in particular employing the technologies related to telecommunications and computers.

The workshop will provide interested IEEE members a forum where they can improve their own lives by involving themselves in the solution of an important contemporary social challenge. Meeting this challenge is bound to improve their own quality of life as well as the quality of life of those aging anywhere.

The workshop addresses a highly relevant contemporary issue. A successful workshop will create a forum that will lead the continued discussion of the productive use of the capabilities of aging but active professionals.

CONTENTS

1. THE NEED FOR A WORKSHOP ON THE POTENTIALS OF AGING PROFESSIONALS

The trend towards better healthcare and ever longer life spans in the industrialized countries of the world is not without problems. Increasing numbers of people are reaching what is mandatory retirement age in many countries. Current economic and social policies do not seem to support the continued active life of retirees. This is the case in the European Union as well as in the rest of the world.

The effects of an aging population are not a thing of the future, but started to influence society more than a decade ago. Scattered over Europe, USA and Japan, some regional activities have raised attention for these phenomena. In that sense Germany had a very active 2005; other countries are still on the benches. But there is little cohesion and too much local focus, while time is running out. The proposed workshop aims to address the problem at large, especially adding the role of the older engineer, and means to bring this to the European level.

Care for the elderly is a strong tradition in Sweden. One of the highest life expectations in the world and a long term commitment by elected government for social support has combined to place Sweden on the frontiers of social innovations to solve the problems of the elderly.

We believe that members of IEEE are in a good position to study the challenges of aging and to provide workable engineering solutions, technical as well as social.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT

To create an appropriate environment for the discussion, dissemination and development of scientific, engineering and social research and studies about:

- The challenges of a mostly healthy life beyond compulsory retirement

- The development of friendly user interfaces for accessing new technologies The use of intellectual capital available from retired professionals, especially those involved in the information and computer technologies

- Accelerating the applicability of the research results to all aspects of the human lives through the use of organizations based on the employment of senior professionals, retired or near retirement

- Applications of information and computer technologies in small geographical socially active regions

- Innovative social schemas: promote finding solutions from the event for contributing to enhance the quality of life based on the availability of retired people.

3. CRITERIA USED FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE EVENT

The event ultimately aims to raise public awareness of one of the most important societal challenges of the present and near future and to influence the debate about public and commercial policy in this regard.

We will publicize the workshop and its proceedings nationally and internationally and make the proceedings available in digital form (CD and/or web). The true value of the proceedings is that they are read and that the message is retained. A large workshop attendance will increase visibility and indirectly, to further our goals. We expect a successful event to have at least 60 individuals (excl. invited speakers etc) attending the workshop; we plan for 100 attendees, from both Sweden and from abroad.

4. PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS EXPECTED TO BE INTERESTED IN THE WORKSHOP

Both society and private companies have invested in the education of people, who still have energy and the intellectual capability to return this investment. People with such energies, when retired, suffer if they are neglected by society in the sense that they no longer feel needed. A quite evident contradiction is observed when considering international leaders, who still can be seen working in positions of high responsibility well into traditional retirement age.

Engineers belonging to the IEEE, the world's leading professional association for the advancement of technology, have provided much of the infrastructure that directly and indirectly has transformed society in the last fifty years. Especially in the Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) the impact has been tremendous. As we are retiring, there is among many of us a desire to continue our careers helping ourselves by helping others.

We believe also that many socially responsible companies would benefit from showing an interest in an initiative seeking new opportunities for an aging but active professional population.

5. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKSHOP

The proposed workshop will take place during a full day and a half in Sweden, tentatively scheduled for October 13 and 14, 2006.

Participants

The success and prestige of the event is guarantee by well-known and relevant speakers making the Welcome and the Conclusions, as well as leading the different working groups.

This will be the first workshop in the area dealing with the opportunities offered us by the prospects of a long and relatively healthy period of retirement. Marketing will be done to engineers on or near retirement, but we will also invite as participants interested representatives of the government and industry, including healthcare with medical electronics.

Participators in several FISTERA events (Seville, 2005; Manchester, 2004; Seville, 2004) will also be invited. These events were organized by the EU Thematic Network on Foresight on Information Society Technologies in the European Research Area.

Tentative Program

Day 1

Plenary – Welcome

Parallel sessions, on topics such as the following:

• Challenges of aging and its Forecasts/Foresight

• User friendly interfaces

• Solutions based on retired seniors

• Economic problems associated with the aging phenomena

Working groups (6 or 7) on issues such as:

• Knowledge transfer

• Experience available

- Consulting services

- Franchising

Day 2

  Presentations of the reporters of the groups

  Wrap-up session, including conclusions on how to go ahead

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Plenary discussions will examine the general challenge of the aging phenomenon and project its future including a quantitative analysis. A statistical analysis of the life expectancy offers the background for an extrapolation for the next decades.

An associated challenge of aging is the ability that people will have for assimilating new technologies. This is related to the possibility of creating interfaces that are so simple that no preparation may be needed for their general use.

The parallel sessions will be devoted to specific proposals and solutions. It is expected that there will be discussions of innovative social concepts. After the separate sessions, four subjects will be examined in ad-hoc working groups. The objectives of these working groups are to find practical ways to employ retired persons.

The second day is devoted to an analysis of the results of these groups and to wrap up the discussions. The presented papers will be published as Proceedings, but in the plenary sessions of the second day, small groups will created to make a summary of the event. These summaries will also be included in the Proceedings.

We believe that we will have a successful conference as reflected in the Proceedings and in local media coverage. The workshop follows the Swedish general elections where the problems of the aging population will have been thoroughly discussed.

As in Sweden, similar discussions have been carried out in the European Union, where the fairly recent opening of borders has resulted in a considerable increase in seasonal and permanent migration to areas with warmer climate, especially from the UK and the Scandinavian countries to the Mediterranean basin.

7. PRESENT STATUS

We have started to promote the conference via the international network of the IEEE, directly and through regional IEEE chapters and national organizations. With very little publicity, we have already received preliminary registration of possible speakers from USA, Israel, Switzerland, and India, among others.

Initial inquiries for a follow-up workshop has been made with some regional IEEE chapters. We believe a longer-term momentum would serve to reinforce public awareness.

8. SPONSORSHIP

We aim to reduce the participant's out-of-pocket expense, mainly in order to increase participation by retired professionals without expense accounts. We will rely on sponsorship to accomplish this goal. The IEEE Foundation has been approached; a decision is expected in June.

Additionally, we seek sponsorship from Swedish and international organizations and industry. We suggest the following levels of sponsorship, and will be pleased to discuss other arrangements.

• 2 main sponsors, at SEK 50,000: mentioned in all press releases; seat on organization and/or program committee; presence at press conferences

• 10 sponsors, at SEK 10,000: Listed in program, in calls for participation, and in publicity material

• Individual travel grants for speakers: Listed in Proceedings