Session Summary: The Future of IRTAW

Chair: Tullio Vardanega
Rapporteur: Luís Miguel Pinho

1. Introduction

The closing session of the workshop had the two-fold objective to assess the success of the 12th edition of IRTAW, and to decide whether the workshop series should continue and, if so, the time frame and the venue of it.

2. Discussion

The session chair, Tullio Vardanega, introduced the subject by presenting a brief overview of this edition of IRTAW as seen from the Program Chair's perspective. He noted that, overall, the workshop this year attracted an acceptable level of interest, regarding both submissions and committed participants. The workshop has a special style to it that works somewhat against widening its scope and quality of participation. Nonetheless the workshop must stay relevant and significant to fulfil its intended role, which requires visibility and, desirably, the injection of fresh blood and/or new attractive discussion topics.

In order to set the basis for the group's decision on the workshop series continuation, Tullio also noted that this IRTAW edition is the last one to fall within the time frame of the Ada revision process. In this respect, a future edition of the workshop in 18 months (kind of IRTAW `Ada.Real_Time.Time_Span` default) would not be particularly useful, since it would be too late to influence the revision process and probably too soon for language technology to be available to evaluate the actual changes to the language.

This notwithstanding, it was felt important that the IRTAW group continue to follow very closely the progress of the language revision process, which would require the group to remain active as such for the duration of the process.

Members of the group argued that IRTAW has had and should continue to have a scope also beyond the current Ada revision process. Useful contributions could still be made after the end of the revision process, regarding the quality of implementation of the accepted changes and their applicability. Further contributions could be made on topics that were not addressed by the current language revision process, such as distribution, partitioning, interoperability with other languages.

Other members of the group expressed the view that other languages might, over time, become more appealing than Ada for research on real-time, therefore taking away from Ada further real-time contributions. This prompted a short discussion on the possibility that IRTAW could distinctly broaden its scope to other real-time languages, but the group felt that the sharp focus of IRTAW was one of its main advantages.

3. Decisions

Drawing conclusions from the discussion, the group decided to defer any decision on future editions of IRTAW to a later time. The group therefore agreed to:

- maintain the IRTAW group electronically active, so as to continue to monitor the Ada language revision process, and;

- hold an IRTAW Program Committee meeting on the occasion of the Ada Europe 2005 conference, to actually decide on the opportunity, and possibly on the logistics, of a new edition of the workshop.