

FRIDAY
LUNCH

Tony Hoare

From: Tony Hoare
Sent: 01 May 2003 13:19
To: 'Robin Milner'
Subject: RE: Wendy Hall: Re: Grand Challenges for Computing Research

I'm away till the end of the week now, so here is my initial reply.

I was not invited to address the foresight conference.

My impression of Foresight is that it is complementary to a Grand Challenge initiative. It is more realistic in starting with the current state of the art, and planning out the next steps against a five year horizon. It is more inclusive, in that it follows the pattern of a call for proposals that might appeal to a large percentage of the research community.

A Grand Challenge attempts to take a longer term view, and accepts that it will attract only a small proportion of the research community to actually work on it. In many research areas (eg., statistics, and probably most of Computer Science), Grand Challenges are simply not appropriate.

I think our moderators mostly realise this, and they have produced drafts that look more like surveys of the field and calls for proposals on the Foresight model. I therefore think it would be an excellent idea to move most of our GC initiative back into the more familiar fold of 'Next steps' and calls for proposals, and 'Research Clusters'. Then any Grand Challenges that emerge from the exercise can be seen as just part of the picture, and we don't have to be comprehensive as we have tried to be at times.

Perhaps you could consider this as the germ of an idea for a practical recommendation to the UKCRC on 26 May. Then we would circulate it to our PC.

Yours, Tony.

-----Original Message-----

From: Robin Milner [mailto:Robin.Milner@cl.cam.ac.uk]
Sent: 30 April 2003 09:32
To: Tony Hoare

Tony -- This from Wendy is meant for both of us, but apparently sent to me only by mistake. Should we talk by phone? She mentions uis"addressing" the Foresight Cog Systems meeting. If one of us does it should be you. Did you intend to?

Robin

----- Forwarded Message

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 00:55:22 +0100
To: Robin Milner <Robin.Milner@CL.CAM.AC.UK>
From: Wendy Hall <wh@ecs.soton.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: Grand Challenges for Computing Research
Cc: Ursula Martin <um@DCS.ST-AND.AC.UK>
In-Reply-To: <E19ASJO-0001ki-00@wisbech.cl.cam.ac.uk>
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"; format=flowed

Dear Robin and Tony

I was tasked by the UKCRC exec to liaise with you about the way UKCRC and yourselves want to take the Grand Challenges forward.

I have a couple of points of information that you might want to take into account while considering this

1. Foresight Cognitive Systems. Nigel Shadbolt and I have been heavily

involved with this and are co-authors with Keith van R of one of the reports that was used as the basis for initial discussions (on Memory, Reasoning and Learning). I understand that you have been invited to address the next Cog Systems workshop on May 14 about the UKCRC Grand Challenges work. I'm just trying to square the circle here, so that you know that there is some considerable overlap between the two initiatives already. They (Foresight) are keen on the Grand Challenges idea so I think we can say that UKCRC has had some influence here, but Nigel and I feel that they are watering the idea down somewhat (so the challenges they are coming up with are far from grand!) and we might want to encourage them to raise their game on this a little!

2. I don't know if you know that I'm President of the BCS next year, and I'm talking to CPHC and UKCRC about organising a BCS/IEE sponsored conference co-located with the CPHC conference next year (~April 2004) to enable the CS community to discuss the "Future of Computer Science Research and Teaching". If this goes ahead (we are still waiting for CPHC to confirm where and when their conference will be held next year and confirm collaboration on the two conferences), then it would seem sensible to hold a Grand Challenges workshop(s) as part of the conference. Does this sound sensible?

Wendy

At 11:26 29/04/2003 +0100, you wrote:

>(From Tony Hoare and Robin Milner)

>

>Dear Colleagues

>

>

Grand Challenges for Computing Research

>

>We wrote to you in January about the Grand Challenges Exercise
>initiated by the UK Computing Research Committee (UKCRC), announcing a
>public discussion to be held on a small number of draft proposals for
>Grand Challenges that were recommended by a UKCRC Workshop last
>November for further development. We append a copy of that message,
>in order to keep this one short.

>

>The discussion has been going now for over three months, and ends on
>26 May. The seven current proposals have been carefully revised in
>response to comment, and re-drafts are being mounted on the web site.

>

>We are writing now to remind you of this last phase of the discussion.
>Would you again please circulate this message to your departmental
>colleagues, encouraging them to take part? We are eager for as many
>people to participate as possible, since the success of the exercise
>depends on the community's support. Even if you have no comment, by
>recording your interest in one or more of the Challenges you will lend
>support to the proposers. The website, with instructions on how to
>take part, is at

>

>http://umbriel.dcs.gla.ac.uk/NeSC/general/esi/events/Grand_Challenges/

>

>After 26 May, UKCRC will consider the state of each proposal and
>recommend how it should be further developed, and on what timescale,
>according to its degree of maturity as judged by the criteria
>published on the web site. All the proposals will remain accessible,
>unless withdrawn by the proposers. We are convinced that this growing
>vision of the future will contribute to the progress and status of
>computing research in the UK, and promote its international standing.

>

>

>With best wishes

>Tony Hoare

>Robin Milner

>

>on behalf of the Programme Committee

>

>

>-----
>
>The previous message:

>
> > To: cphc-members@JISCMAIL.AC.UK
> > Subject: Grand Challenges for Computing Research
> > Date: Fri, 17 Jan 2003 17:20:27 +0000

>
> > Dear Colleagues

> > Grand Challenges for Computing Research

> > This message brings you up to date with the Grand Challenges
> > Exercise, initiated by the UK Computing Research Committee (UKCRC).
> > Would you please circulate it to everyone in your department; we
> > are keen that everyone in UK engaged in academic computing research is
> > made aware of the chance to take further part in the Exercise.

> > Here is what has happened since we last wrote to you on 23 September,
> > asking for submissions to the Grand Challenges (GC) Workshop:

> > 109 submissions were received;
> > The workshop was held in Edinburgh on 24-26 November;
> > The 60 participants between them studied all the submissions;
> > They recommended around 10 GC topics for further development;
> > A public discussion of these and other proposals begins NOW;
> > It continues for four months.

> > Please visit our Grand Challenges website:

> > http://umbriel.dcs.gla.ac.uk/NeSC/general/esi/events/Grand_Challenges/

> > You will find there all submissions to the Workshop that have not been
> > withdrawn by their authors. You will also find draft proposals for six
> > GCs, or parts of GCs, and further proposals will be available shortly.
> > But most important, you will find instructions on how you can contribute
> > to the exercise, either by working on one of the draft proposals, or
> > by submitting a new proposal of your own. At the end of May, the entire
> > content of the Website will constitute the supporting material for the
> > report of the programme committee to the UKCRC.

> > We very much hope that you will play a full part in the Exercise. It may
> > have a lasting effect in giving focus to computing research in the UK,
> > and ensuring that this country continues to play a leading role on the
> > international scene. The success of the Exercise lies in your hands.

> > With best wishes

> > Tony Hoare

> > Robin Milner

> > on behalf of the Programme Committee

Professor Wendy Hall CBE FREng
Intelligence, Agents, Multimedia Group
Dept of Electronics and Computer Science
University of Southampton,
Southampton, Hants SO17 1BJ
Tel: +44 2380 592388 Fax: +44 2380 592865
<http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~wh>

----- End of Forwarded Message