

Message from the General Co-Chairs

It gives us immense pleasure in welcoming you to the Second International Conference on Autonomous Robots and Agents, ICARA 2004. If there is one important technology that must be harnessed to enhance productivity, it is the intelligence in automation systems. This, we believe, will bring tremendous economic gains to human kind in the next few decades. Application of robotics in automation has got a strong foothold; robots are roaming the production floors, they are increasingly being used in the service industry and they have found their way into our homes. Indeed, development of robots for personal care and companionship is the next growth area. Research in the broad area of robotics and autonomous systems encompasses such fields as artificial neural networks, neuro-fuzzy systems, genetic algorithms, genetic programming and evolutionary computing, apart from the traditional fields of image processing, motion control and communication.

ICARA has a very brief history. It started off in 2000 as an International Symposium on Autonomous Robots and Agents (ISARA 2000) which was held in Singapore in conjunction with the Singapore Robotic Games (SRG). A total of 16 papers were presented. The phenomenal growth of the conference can be judged from the fact that for ICARA 2004, 98 papers were received of which 79 were accepted and will be presented at the conference in parallel oral sessions, posters sessions and a special session on Humanoid Robots.

Several people and organisations need to be thanked and acknowledged for their contribution to the success of the conference. We wish to thank all the authors for their contribution, our sponsors for the financial and technical support and all the members of the organising committee for their tireless efforts. Thanks to all the paper reviewers for doing a thorough and timely job. Special thanks to Prof. Kim Jong-Hwan and Prof. Mel Siegel for accepting our invitation to come and deliver the keynote addresses.

We hope that you will have a very fruitful and stimulating time at the conference and a pleasant stay in New Zealand.

G. Sen Gupta
ICARA 2004 General Co-Chair
Massey University, Palmerston North
g.sengupta@massey.ac.nz

Chris Messom
ICARA 2004 General Co-Chair
Massey University, Palmerston North
c.h.messom@massey.ac.nz