

# Preface

The Symposium on Theoretical Aspects of Computer Science (STACS) is alternately held in France and Germany. The latest conference, February 27 to March 1, 2003 at the Institute of Computer Science, Freie Universität Berlin is the twentieth in this series. The previous meetings took place in Paris (1984), Saarbrücken (1985), Orsay (1986), Passau (1987), Bordeaux (1988), Paderborn (1989), Rouen (1990), Hamburg (1991), Cachan (1992), Würzburg (1993), Caen (1994), München (1995), Grenoble (1996), Lübeck (1997), Paris (1998), Trier (1999), Lille (2000), Dresden (2001), and Antibes/Juan-les-Pins (2002).

Unlike some other important theory conferences STACS covers the whole range of theoretical computer science including algorithms and data structures, automata and formal languages, complexity theory, semantics, logic in computer science, and current challenges like biological computing, quantum computing, and mobile and net computing.

The interest in STACS has been increasing continuously during recent years and has turned it into one of the most significant conferences in theoretical computer science. The STACS 2003 call for papers led to a record number of 253 submissions from all over the world.

It is needless to say that the job of the program committee was not easy. In a very intense meeting in Berlin on November 1 and 2, 2002, its members spent a total of 20 hours selecting the papers to be presented at the conference. The decision was based on more than 1100 reviews done by external referees in the weeks before the meeting. We would like to thank our fellow committee members and all external referees (see the list below) for the valuable work they put into the reviewing process of this conference.

After the submission deadline, the steering committee decided to extend the length of the conference to three full days. Nevertheless, with a maximum of 58 papers only, just 22 percent of the submissions could be accepted. Although it is regrettable that many good papers had to be rejected, the strict selection guaranteed the really very high scientific quality of the conference.

We would like to thank the three invited speakers Ernst W. Mayr (TU Munich), Alain Viari (INRIA, Grenoble), and Victor Vianu (UC San Diego) for presenting their results to the audience of STACS 2003.

Special thanks for the local organization go to Christian Knauer, who spent a lot of time and effort and did most of the organizational work. We also thank the other members of the work group Theoretical Computer Science at the Free University of Berlin involved in the organization of the conference, in particular Tamara Knoll and Astrid Sturm.

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Berlin, January 2003

Helmut Alt  
Michel Habib

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<sup>1</sup> This list has been automatically compiled from the conference's database. We apologize for any omissions or inaccuracies.

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