



GVU's IAP is 'Building Bridges' with Industry

You probably haven't spent much time wondering why GVU has an industrial affiliates program. In a world of dwindling federal research funds (for some) and semi-permanent public radio fund drives, the motive seems obvious—money.

Of course, we appreciate the generosity of our members. IAP fees support graduate students, and equipment donations give us a world-class teaching environment. We work hard to ensure that members are happy with the information and access they receive in return for their gifts.

But the rationale for the IAP is more symmetric than this. GVU is as much a consumer of ideas as a supplier—as any research center must be that tries to change the ways in which society uses technology. The problems that drive our research and the settings in which our results are used are ultimately very pragmatic.

Ground-breaking research in our field requires a concrete awareness of industry's problems, just as novel commercial products need innovative research input. A symmetric partnership is essential: we get direct knowledge to the practical problems and market opportunities of the member companies, while our members benefit from the fruits of our research.

Elsewhere in this issue, Jim Foley remarks on the importance of personal interaction in making that partnership effective. GVU's industrial affiliates program is not about exchanging technical reports or software demonstrations; it is about exchanging (even if only temporarily) people.

During the past year, we have had extended visits from Matthias Schneider (Siemens) and Tomonari Kanba (NEC). A second visitor from NEC will arrive

shortly for a further year, followed soon by a visiting scientist from our newest affiliate, Hitachi. GVU faculty members Scott Hudson and Al Badre spent several months this year at research labs in US West and Siemens, respectively. And many graduate students worked as interns during this summer with IAP members and other companies (see page. 7). One of the principal themes of our Research Review Day for our Industrial Affiliates (to be held on February 8) will be our current interactions with IAP members.

As the IAP goes into its third year, we continue to develop the program. We now offer associate membership to smaller companies, and we welcome Bentley Systems and ERDAS, Inc. as the first IAP associate members. We are also planning a series of focused research programs within GVU. The first of these, emphasizing usability, is described by Al Badre below. Look for further developments during the next year. ♦

GVU Industrial Affiliates:

- Asea Brown Boveri
- BellSouth IntelliVentures
- Digital Equipment Corporation
- Hewlett-Packard Research Labs
- Hitachi Research Laboratory
- Intel Corporation
- Mitsubishi Electric Research Labs
- NEC Corporation
- Siemens AG
- Silicon Graphics, Inc.
- Sun Microsystems

Associate Members

- Bentley Systems, Inc.
- ERDAS, Inc.

New Usability Engineering Program Organized

The GVU Center has created a new forum for bilateral communication and technology transfer between user interface development professionals and human factors/usability researchers and scholars. The Usability Engineering Program provides a mechanism for companies and researchers to work together applying technological advances in software usability engineering to everyday business problems.

GVU researchers are developing and testing *I-Observe*, a state-of-the-art set of usability methods and tools, which encompasses a range of capabilities including event logging and session recording, analysis, and visualization. This research into improving usability testing of software products and systems is on-going, and is expected to yield increasingly useful tools as the technology becomes more sophisticated.

Program membership is \$20,000 annually; however, companies that join the GVU Industrial Affiliates Program—for an annual donation of \$30,000—may join the Usability Engineering Program at no additional cost. We are happy to welcome Intel Corporation, Hewlett-Packard and Siemens AG as charter members of the Usability Engineering Program. For more information contact:

Al Badre (CoC): 404/894-2598; email: usability@gvu.gatech.edu

Research Review Day Moved to February

GVU's annual Research Review Day has been moved from November 1995 to February 8, 1996. This permanent change to February was necessitated by an increasing number of conferences and workshops in November. Research Review Day, which is open to all employees of our Industrial Affiliates, promises to be a full day of demonstrations and presentations of current and proposed research. The Industrial Advisory Board will meet on February 9. Look for email about these events in November. ♦